

Shahnama Studies

II

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Studies in Persian Cultural History

Editors

Charles Melville
Cambridge University

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Leiden University

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Shahnama Studies

II

The Reception of Firdausi's *Shahnama*

Edited by

Charles Melville
Gabrielle van den Berg



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Cover Illustration: 'Kai Kavus in his flying machine.' Topkapı Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 1486, fol. 71r.

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Dedicated to the memory of
OLEG GRABAR
(1929-2011)

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ABBREVIATIONS

B	Ye.E. Bertel's <i>et al.</i> 's edition of the <i>Shahnama</i> , 9 vols. (Moscow, 1960-71)
BL	British Library, London
BM	British Museum, London
BNF	Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris
BOD	Bodleian Library, Oxford
Br	Berukhim edition of the <i>Shahnama</i> , ed. M. Minovi, 'A. Iqbal & S. Nafisi, 10 vols. (Tehran, 1313-15/1934-36)
BS	Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich
CUL	University Library, Cambridge
DS	Sayyid Muhammad Dabir-Siyaqi's edition of the <i>Shahnama</i> , 6 vols. (Tehran, 1335/1956)
FGA	Freer Gallery of Art, Washington D.C.
FN	<i>Firuzshahnama</i>
GOW	Franz Babinger, <i>Die Geschichtsschreiber der Osmanen und ihre Werke</i> (Leipzig, 1927)
HOP	E.J.W. Gibb, <i>A History of Ottoman Poetry</i> , 6 vols. (London, 1900-9)
IN	<i>Iskandarnama</i>
I.O.	India Office (mss. now held in the British Library)
IOM	Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, St Petersburg
JRL	John Rylands University Library of Manchester
KM	Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh <i>et al.</i> 's edition of the <i>Shahnama</i> , 8 vols. (Costa Mesa & New York, 1987-2008)
LACMA	Los Angeles County Museum of Art
M	Jules Mohl's edition of the <i>Shahnama</i> , 7 vols. (Paris, 1838-78); Persian text only, reprinted with continuous pagination, and Mohl's preface translated into Persian by Jahangir Afkari, 4 vols. (Tehran 1345/1971, and subsequent reprintings)
MET	Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
NLR	National Library of Russia, St Petersburg
ÖNB	Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna
OM	Brusalı Mehmed Tahrır, <i>Osmanlı Müellifleri</i> , 3 vols. (Istanbul, 1916-24)
ROM	Royal Ontario Museum

SO	Mehmed Süreyya, <i>Sicill-i osmani</i> , 6 vols. (Istanbul, 1996)
Suppl. pers.	Supplément persan, BNF
TIEM	Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi, İstanbul
TSMK	Topkapı Saray Museum Library, İstanbul
WW	A.G. & E. Warner's translation of the <i>Shahnama</i> , 9 vols. (London, 1908-25)

NOTE ON CITATIONS OF THE SHAHNAMA

The contributors refer to different editions of the *Shahnama*, which are indicated here by an abbreviation (see above). Although Jules Mohl's classic edition of the Persian text and facing French translation remains valuable, it is cited here with reference to one of the two main reprints of the Persian text alone. The first, published in 4 vols. in Tehran (1345/1966), included a translation of Mohl's preface by Jahangir Afkari. The other, with an introduction by Muhammad Amin Riyahi, was published in 3 vols. (2nd printing, Tehran, 1370/1991). Both have continuous pagination across the volumes, but the page numbering differs. None of the four standard editions cited give a cumulative line number for the whole work, which is divided into 50 discrete chapters. These chapters were assigned an alpha-numerical designation by Fritz Wolff, *Glossar zu Firdosis Schahname* (Berlin, 1935, vi-vii), which was followed in the edition of Dabir-Siyāqi, and retained in Kumiko Yamamoto's analysis of the text (*The oral background of Persian epics: Storytelling and poetry*, Leiden, 2003, xiv-xviii).

In general, where the discussion focuses on a single episode, reference is made to the edition and line number (verse, or *bait*) of that chapter (e.g. M, 1234, indicates Mohl's edition, verse 1234). Reference may also be given to the chapter, in case of ambiguity, either by the Wolff alpha-numeric designation (12d, 13f, etc.) or by the chapter (reign) title (Siyavush, Davazdah rukh, etc.). Where the discussion ranges over the whole work, citation is made by edition, volume number, page number, line (verse) number (e.g. B, V, 86, vs. 10-11, indicates Bertel's, vol. V, p. 86, lines 10-11).

It should be noted that a line of text in the manuscripts of the *Shahnama* generally contains two or sometimes three lines (verses, *bait*) of the poem, and that each verse consists of two half lines (*misra'*). The use of the term *bait* or verse (v., vs.) is intended to avoid uncertainty over the meaning of 'line' in any given instance.

COLOUR PLATES

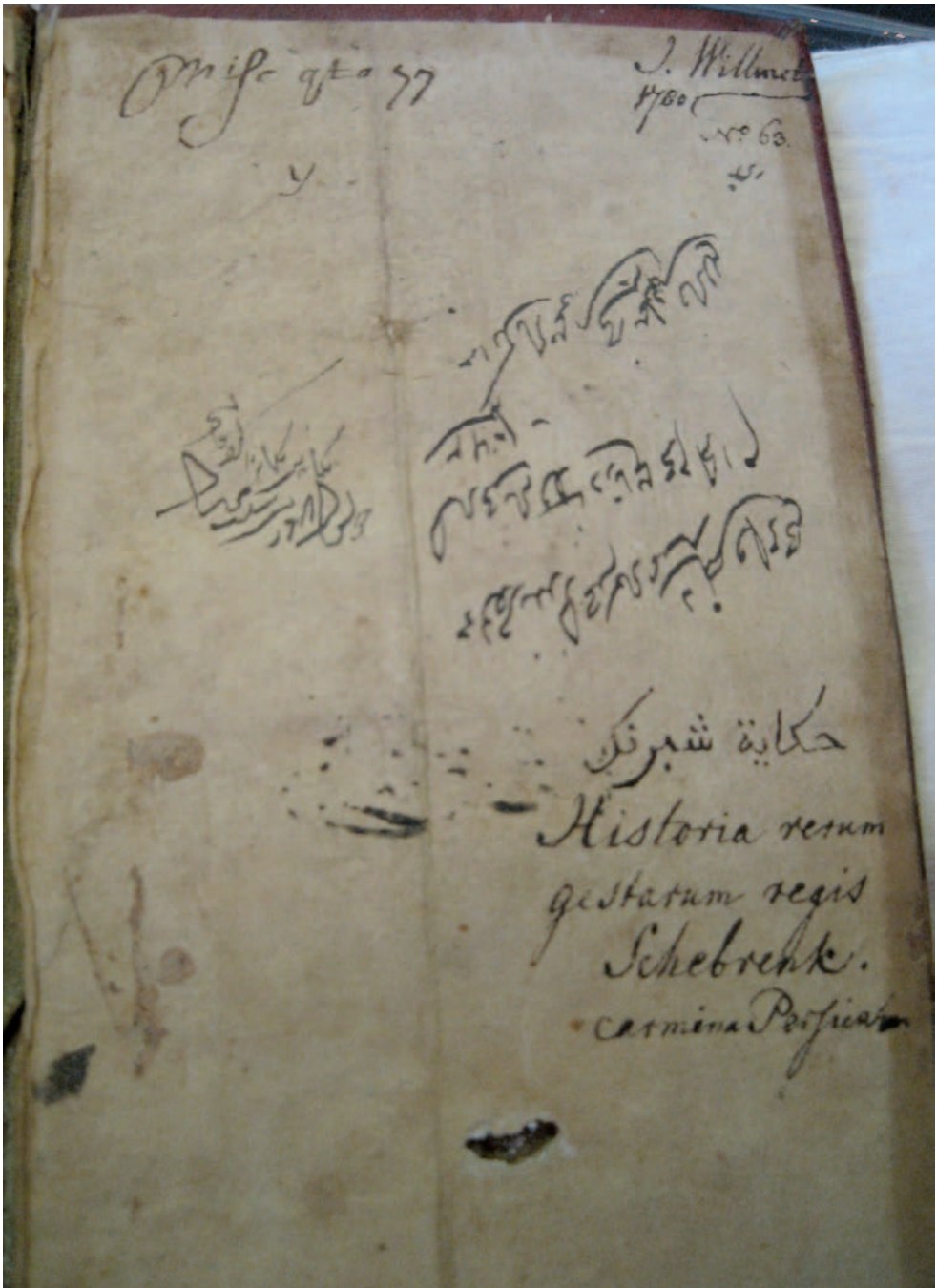


Figure 1. Leiden University Library, Acad. 150, *Shabrangnama*. Inside cover with owner's name, J. Willmet and date 1780.

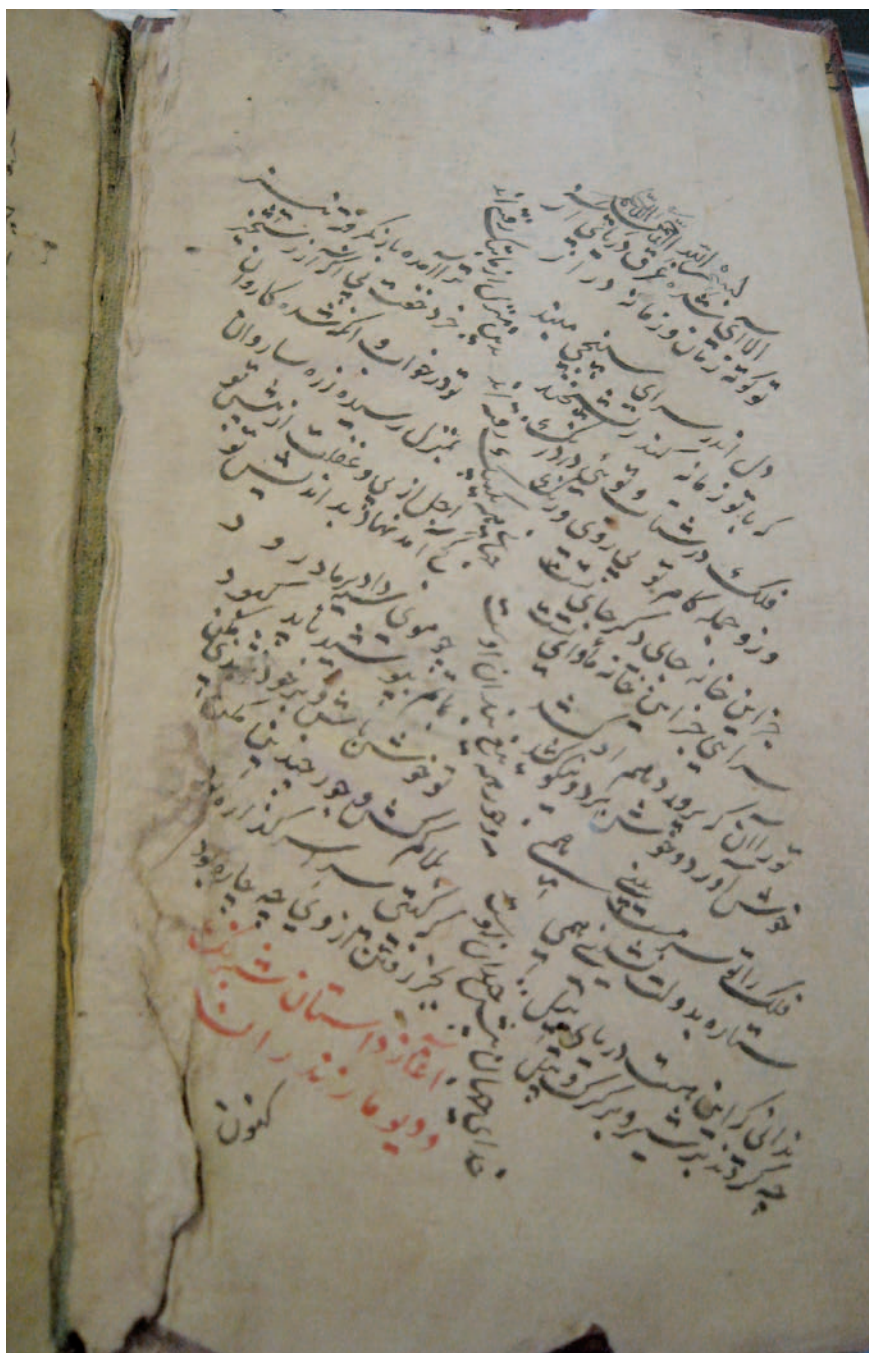


Figure 2. Leiden University Library, Acad. 150, *Shabrangnama*. Folio 14, The beginning of the *Shabrangnama*.



Figure 1. 'Hushang kills the Black Div'. *Shahnama*, probably Shiraz, 753/1352 (fol. 5r). Lent by the Ebrahimi Collection; Courtesy of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.: LTS1998.1.1.5a-b.



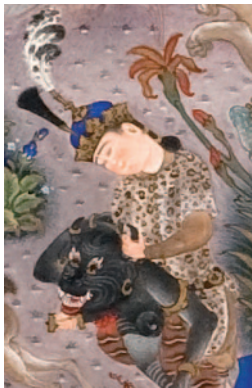
Figure 2. 'Hushang kills the Black Div'. *Shahnama*, probably Shiraz, 845/1441 (fol. 11r). Lent by the Art and History Collection; Courtesy of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.: LTS1995.2.24.



Figure 3. 'Hushang kills the Black Div'. *Shahnama* of Shah Tahmasp, Tabriz, c. 1525-35 (fol. 21v). Private Collection.



Detail 1. *Div* with male genitalia.



Detail 2. Hushang's impassive expression.



Detail 3. The nervous reactions of the *divs*.



Figure 4. 'The White Div captures and blinds Kay Kavus and his army'. *Shahnama* of Shah Isma'il II, Qazvin, 985/1576-77. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.: Purchase in appreciation of Mary Wilkie Ebrahimi and her exemplary service to the Galleries as vice chair of the Board of Trustees (2003-2007), F2006.7.



Figure 1. 'Baby Rustam and his mother'. Firdausi, *Shahnama*, Topkapı Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 1478, fol. 246v. Dateable c. 1490 (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Saray Museum, Istanbul).



Figure 4. Illuminated dedication pages. *Garshasname*, Süleymaniye Library, Istanbul, Ayasofya 3287, fols. 1v-2r . Dated 905/1499 (Photo: courtesy of the Süleymaniye Library).



Figure 7. 'Enthronement of Kayumars'. *Şema'il-name-i Âl-i Osman*, Topkapı Saray Museum Library, A. 3592, fol. 19r. Dateable c. 1590 (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Saray Museum, Istanbul).



Figure 8. 'Enthronement of Kayumars'. Firdausi, *Shahnama*, Turkish and Islamic Art Museum, Istanbul, T. 1984, fol. 18v. Dated 956/1549 (Photo: courtesy of the Turkish and Islamic Art Museum, Istanbul).



Figure 4. 'Kai Kavus in his flying machine'. Firdausi, *Shahnama*, c. 1590-1600. Topkapı Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 1486, fol. 71r.



Figure 5. 'Kai Kavus in his flying machine'. Firdausi, *Shahnama*, 928/1522. Topkapı Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 1485, fol. 85v.



Figure 6. 'The Kaisar of Rum before Shapur'. Firdausi, *Shahname*, c. 1590-1600.
 Topkapı Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 1486, fol. 369v.



Figure 7. 'Shangul and his daughter meet in Iran'. Firdausi, *Shahnama*, c. 1590-1600. Topkapı Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 1486, fol. 404v.



Figure 2. 'Ardavan and Ardashir hunting onagers', by Mathura, from a Sultanate/Mughal *Shahnama*, c. 1580-85, Sotheby's, 19 October 1994, lot 112, fol. 318r.



Figure 5. 'Bahram Gur hunting with Fitna', by Mah Muhammad, from a *Khamasa* of Nizami, Mughal c. 1585-90, Keir Collection, London, fol. 184v.



Figure 6. Left-hand page of a hunting frontispiece from a sub-imperial *Shahnama*, possibly northwest India or Sind, c. 1590, Sotheby's, 10 October 1988, lot 206, fol. 2r.



Figure 10. 'Bahram Gur or Khusrau hunting in the presence of a slave girl', Mughal, c. 1610, Private Collection, London.



Figure 2. 'Rustam rescues Bizhan from the pit'. *Shahnama*, Samarqand, 1600, British Library, London, I.O. Islamic 301, fol. 142r (Courtesy British Library Board. All Rights Reserved).



Figure 3. 'Rustam rescues Bizhan from the pit'. *Shahnama*, Samarqand, 1602-3, National Library of Russia, St. Petersburg, PNS 90, fol. 280v (By kind permission of the National Library of Russia).





Figure 9. 'Zahhak enthroned with the two daughters of Jamshid'. Page from a manuscript of the *Shahname* (Book of Kings), c. 1615, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, M. 83.27.2 (Courtesy Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Museum Acquisition Fund, Indian Art Acquisition Fund, and Julian C. Wright Bequest; Photograph ©2008 Museum Associates/LACMA).



Figure 1. 'Dragon Island'. *Aja'ib al-makhlūqat* by Qazvini (Arabic), FGA 54, fol. 61r. Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.: Purchase, F1954.61.



Figure 2. 'Dragon Island'. *Aja'ib al-makhlūqat* by Qazvini (Persian), Topkapı Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 403, fols. 88v-89r. By kind permission of Topkapı Palace Museum.



Figure 4. 'The fire ordeal of Siyavush'. 'Aja'ib al-makhluqat' by Tusi, Topkapı Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 404, fol. 46v. By kind permission of Topkapı Palace Museum.



Figure 5. 'Isfandiyar fights the dragon'. *Aja'ib al-makhlūqat* by Tusi, Topkapı Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 401, fol. 256v. By kind permission of Topkapı Palace Museum.

INTRODUCTION

The fact that the *Shahnama* of Firdausi is now in its 1001st year does not necessarily mean that a post-millennium lethargy can or should settle over those who remain committed to the study of this great poem. We might even claim that the rather intensive activities surrounding the past year's celebrations are largely to blame for the extended delay in the preparation of this book. So now, we trust, normal services are resumed, in the belief that the appetite for scholarship on the *Shahnama* has been whetted rather than exhausted by the publicity it has received in recent months.

The papers published here were mainly presented at a conference held at Pembroke College, Cambridge, on 13-15 December 2007, under the auspices of the Shahnama Project. The broad theme of this meeting was 'The Reception of the *Shahnama*'—both within Iran as reflected in subsequent poetic engagement with the text and related epic stories, and in the culture of neighbouring lands. The conference was conceived as the first of a pair, in association with Leiden University and the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO)-funded project on the 'Persian Epic Cycle and the Shahnama of Ferdowsi' undertaken there by Gabrielle van den Berg. She convened a second conference on the same theme in Leiden, 8-10 January 2009, and a few of the papers presented on that occasion have been incorporated into this volume. A second collection of the remaining papers is currently in preparation; this will also contain some of the papers held over from the first conference.¹ Full details of the programme of both these meetings can be found on the Shahnama Project website.

Before introducing briefly the contents of the book, we must refer with great sadness to the death on 8 January 2011 of Professor Oleg Grabar, to whose memory we dedicate these studies. Oleg was the much-loved teacher and mentor of generations of art historians, many of whom have contributed their research to the work of the Shahnama Project, and he

¹ Papers presented in 2007 have been published elsewhere, by F. Abdullaeva, in *Per-sica* 23 (2009-10), 1-29; Olga Vasilyeva, in *Manuscripta Orientalia* 15/ii (2009), 38-56; and Barbara Brend, in *Muhammad Juki's Shahnamah of Firdausi* (London, 2010). Papers presented in 2009 have been published by Alyssa Gabbay, in *Iranian Studies* 42/v (2009), 677-92, and Sebastiaan den Uijl, in *Iranian Studies* 43/i (2010), 71-90, respectively.

was one of its founding fathers. Not only had he, years previously, inspired the seminal first efforts at a systematic catalogue of *Shahnama* paintings in the work of Jill Norgren and Edward Davis (*Preliminary index of Shah-Nameh illustrations*, Ann Arbor, 1969), but he was party to the initial discussions about the project in Princeton in 1997-98 and retained an active and benevolent interest in its progress thereafter, as a founder member of our Advisory Committee. He also kindly hosted a workshop on my behalf during a semester at the Institute for Advanced Study, on 10 February 2006. It is a matter of great regret that Oleg never came to Cambridge, already complaining for some years of a tiring travel programme and 'doctor's orders'. His vision of possible futures for the study of the *Shahnama* will continue to light the way ahead.

In one of his last publications, Oleg Grabar took up again the question of the relationships between painting and poetry ("Why was the *Shahnama* illustrated?"),² which remains a fundamental element of the research programme of the Shahnama Project. Artists' engagement with the text is nevertheless only one aspect of the reception of the poem. There remains the place of the *Shahnama* in the subsequent poetic output of Persian writers, their reactions to the poem and efforts to improve or amplify it. Important also is the afterlife of the poem as a totemic expression of Persian political values and courtly culture; and its enduring place in popular oral tradition. Finally, as a consequence of its leading role in embodying all these dimensions of Iranian civilisation—political, literary and artistic—is its inevitable impact on Iran's neighbours, whether rivals or admirers of her political dominance and cultural influence over large tracts of southwest and central Asia.

These are the themes addressed in this volume and taken up again in the companion collection that will follow. The papers have been grouped here into four sections. The first deals with the later or secondary epics of the so-called Sistan cycle, together with other prose and poetic compositions that echo or mimic the *Shahnama* in one way or another. Gabrielle van den Berg's chapter introduces the little-known story of Shabrang, the demon son of the White Div, whose efforts to avenge his father's death at the hands of Rustam come to naught. The story appears as an interpolation in a handful of *Shahnama* manuscripts, and as a stand-alone text in a copy kept in Leiden. Similarly, the *Faramarznama* follows the return of Kay Khusrau to Iran and the launching of his war of revenge against

² *Iranian Studies* 43/i (2010), 91-96.

Afrasiyab—before which, he despatches Faramarz to India. This episode is not referred to again in the *Shahnama*, but the loose end is tied up in the *Faramarznama*, which exists not only as a separate work in a small number of manuscripts, but also interpolated into a few copies of the *Shahnama*. Marjolijn van Zutphen's painstaking comparisons of the different texts of this story in its longer version not only reveal the efforts of later authors to fill out stories left incomplete by Firdausi, but also how eventually, if only in the process of copying, elements of the later work could bleed back into the text of the *Shahnama* itself.

Much of the effort of the protagonists of these stories is directed towards fighting the demons (*divs*), the depiction of whom is discussed by Francesca Leoni as an example of the reception of the moral message of the *Shahnama*. The *divs* are interpreted as the embodiment of evil and therefore to have evil-looking bodies, as a foil to the upright and virtuous character of the heroes who confront them, who are portrayed with a sort of abstract physical perfection. Despite their ugly appearance, the *divs* often display more 'human' emotions than their assailants. The elemental nature of the combat between Good and Evil in the *Shahnama* can also be taken to explain the popularity of the topic of Rustam's fight against the White Div, the archetypal expression of this conflict.

As for the associated non-Sistani compositions, Julia Rubanovich provides a detailed analysis of several prose works (*dastan*) that quote verses directly from the *Shahnama* (such as Bighami's *Firuzshahnama*), or use Firdausi's work as a source (such as the anonymous *Iskandarnama*), or else—like the *Darabnama* of Tarsusi—perhaps point to a parallel epic tradition outside that of the *Shahnama*. This is a very rich paper, the argument enhanced and supported by close textual comparisons and statistical evidence, the beauties of which we must leave the reader to enjoy. The upshot is that by the 15th century, interest in the *Shahnama* had spread beyond courtly circles and the established literary canon and spilled over into folk prose compositions, which also reveal a parallel epic narrative tradition on the cusp of the oral-textual interface inhabited by the popular storytellers. It is worth observing, incidentally, that several of these prose epics have also been illustrated—a separate topic for investigation.

The Zoroastrian verse epic, telling the story of Arday Viraf, while evidently preserving Zoroastrian religious traditions, is also ready to place the narrative in the reign of the first Sasanian ruler, Ardashir, for which the author refers his readers to the *Shahnama*; he also draws didactic lessons from Firdausi's work, on the fleeting nature of the power and maj-

esty of kings. Olga Yastrebova introduces a manuscript of the extended version of the text, kept in the National Library of Russia (St Petersburg), which she shows to be a single coherent work, despite the apparently fragmentary nature of its contents. The author, Zartusht son of Bahram, was writing in the final quarter of the 13th century (around the time of the earliest known *Shahnama* manuscripts), by which time the text was clearly known and accessible. The result, however, was a somewhat awkward amalgam of the Zoroastrian priestly tradition and the historical and chronological information contained in Firdausi's epic.

A separate section of this volume is devoted to a different aspect of the persistent popularity of the *Shahnama* and related story cycles among traditional storytellers. These three contributions are not intended as standard academic papers, with full scholarly argumentation and bibliographies, but rather as first-hand observations of a most important aspect of the reception of the *Shahnama*, namely its place in the folklore of contemporary Iran and neighbouring Persian-speaking regions. The authors present reports on their field researches both outside and within Iran. Professor Steblin-Kamensky describes fieldwork carried out over a long period on the former Soviet side of the Iranian border at Sarakhs in Turkmenistan, with some transcriptions of passages from the story of Rostam and Suhrab and of Suhrab's son Barzu. He points to some significant variations from Firdausi's version, and also to the formulaic and repetitive nature of certain stock passages, such as the hero mounting his horse. The author notes the great antiquity of the Sistanian legends, a major folklore source for the Iranian epic. Rahmon Rahmoni also explores the Barzu narrative in Tajikistan, and the association of Barzu with the region of Boysun. Contrary to the findings of Prof. Steblin, Rahmoni does not notice great departures from the written text of the story, but remarks the change of some personal and geographical names, reflecting the local identification with the story, and also the presence of many Uzbek words in the vocabulary. Although Rahmoni notes that the traditional storytelling is still vibrant, he also sees its gradual demise and urges the recording and publication of as many performances as possible. A similar call is made by Evangelos Venetis, who found storytelling and *Shahnama-khvani* still in evidence in Mashhad, accompanied by the playing of the *tar*, and in Firuzkuh, where the reciter read from a printed edition of the text, occasionally adding verses of his own composition. Although still to be found in rural contexts, Venetis considers that the modernisation of society especially in the cities is undermining the interest in and performance

of traditional storytelling. We anticipate that future volumes in this series will continue to dedicate a section to field reports and personal observations of the importance of the *Shahnama* in contemporary society.

The two other sections concentrate more fully on the reception of the *Shahnama* in the arts of the book, although the fact that the book was illustrated at all reflects the different elements of why it continued to appeal to patrons and collectors alike. The presence of heroes of the *Shahnama* in other narrative works, addressed by Julia Rubanovich and Olga Yastrebova, is also discussed by Bilha Moor in connection with the genre of '*Aja'ib al-makhlūqat* (Wonders of creation) literature. Heroes of the *Shahnama* are introduced into these encyclopaedias of the natural and physical world, either in connection with particular places, such as 'Dragon Island'—which does not exist in the *Shahnama* but permits the introduction of the story of Iskandar killing a dragon—or elements such as Fire, which lends itself to the depiction of Siyavush's fire ordeal. In the Persian versions of the famous encyclopaedia of Qazvini, a new section is introduced on the 'customs of the Persians', which provides a pretext for stories and associated pictures of Kayumars, Rustam and Bahram Gur. Somewhat similarly, later manuscripts of Tusi's '*Aja'ib* include episodes and pictures not found in the original 12th-century versions; both these developments reveal a persistent and even growing interest in the Iranian heroes and legends and demand for information about them.

Much of this demand came from the Ottoman Turks, expressed both as an interest in handsomely illustrated copies of the text, and by appropriating the royal, ethical and heroic message of the *Shahnama* to the formation of an Ottoman imperial image. The three papers presented here necessarily draw on very similar materials, but approach the question of the Ottomans' engagement with Firdausi's *Shahnama* in different ways. Jan Schmidt measures the reception of the work first by documenting the number of copies surviving in Turkish libraries, and their provenance, almost all acquired as gifts, confiscations, war booty, or purchases from Iranian workshops. He concludes that the *Shahnama* was not a genuinely popular work, its circulation restricted to a small circle of courtiers and intellectuals. Schmidt also documents the translation of the work into Turkish, both prose and poetic, ranging from 1367 to 1945, and then the Ottoman 'imitations' of the *Shahnama*, as particularly seen in the well-known post and output of the official *Shahnama*-writers (*şehnameci*), which kept the idiom and exemplary significance of Firdausi's work alive till the end of the 16th century. Despite this activity, the conclusion

remains that his text could not compete with the poetry of Sa'di or Hafiz in popular demand: or, as mentioned in Lâle Uluç's paper, Jami or particularly Nizami—a point also made by Karin Ruehrdanz in connection with Transoxania (see below). Zeren Tanındı covers some of the same ground, but with a focus on the illustrated copies of the *Shahnama* in Turkey, and especially the illustration of the Turkish translations and imitative verse histories of the Ottoman sultans, which played an important part in the arts of the book in Turkey. Her conclusions are therefore somewhat different from Schimdt's, suggesting the *Shahnama* remained important in Turkey, although implicitly once again only in court circles. Lâle Uluç, finally, focuses on one such book, which she notes is the only known illustrated Ottoman copy of the *Shahnama* in Persian—that is, the Persian text of the work, produced and illustrated in Ottoman territory, albeit the border province of Baghdad. This manuscript has a seal dated 1023/1614 and must have been produced at the end of the 16th century. Uluç discusses both the similarities to Shiraz manuscript production of the period, and the more distinctively Ottoman features of the illustrations, such as the attention to the carrying of flowers in processions. More generally, Uluç sees the value placed on Firdausi's *Shahnama* to be not simply, or even mainly, to assert the royal or heroic qualities of the Ottoman sultans, but rather as an indication of the perception of a common Turko-Persian heritage shared with Iran. Despite the considerable overlap in the information discussed, therefore, these three papers all contribute different views on the reception of the *Shahnama* in Ottoman Turkey and implicitly on cultural transmission across the Turko-Persian world.

Such shared heritages were equally evident in both north India (Hindustan) and Central Asia. Against the context of the rather limited evidence for the production of copies of the *Shahnama* at the Mughal court, Adeela Qureshi explores the well-known story of Bahram Gur and the slave girl, who challenged him to a feat of marksmanship and then incurred Bahram's displeasure for her reaction; the story is treated differently by later poets, Nizami and Amir Khusrau Dihlavi, but the artistic treatment of the subject is not so clear-cut. Indeed, without the accompanying text, the correct identity of individual paintings is hard to discern with certainty, despite the fact that the different poets highlight different elements of the slave girl's challenge. Qureshi's analysis of the paintings of these scenes addresses both the way in which the artists working in Hindustan have modified the iconography to reflect local conditions of

flora and fauna, and more generally, how they reflect the importance of hunting prowess as a royal attribute at the Mughal court.

The section on the reception of the *Shahnama* in neighbouring lands ends with a chapter by Karin Ruehrdanz, who again remarks on the relatively little interest in illustrated copies of the text at the Shaibanid court of 16th-century Central Asia, even if the reasons, connected with the fragmented nature of political power, might differ from those obtaining in Mughal India. Nevertheless, standing out against this general background, Ruehrdanz focuses on a small but coherent group of illustrated copies of the text, mainly produced in Samarqand in the first decade of the 17th century, and probably marking an effort to attract the patronage of the new Janid line of Uzbek rulers there, but in vain. The author shows that patronage of the arts soon returned to Bukhara with the rule of the Janid Vali Muhammad Khan (1605-12) and together with this, a return to the more popular didactic literature.

Emerging from this group of studies of the reception of the *Shahnama* in Ottoman Turkey, Mughal India and Uzbek Central Asia, therefore, is the perhaps unexpected conclusion that for all its resonance as a textual model for kingly virtues and military achievements, and even an expression of shared Turko-Persian heroic traditions, these values were only perceived as serviceable for rather brief periods, or specific moments, often connected with the establishment of new dynastic regimes, outside Iran itself. Otherwise, as indeed within Iran too, as measured by the production of illustrated manuscripts, other works or genres of painting enjoyed a greater popularity, at least from the 16th century onwards.

Finally, Farhad Mehran, whose contribution to the structure and underlying concept of the *Shahnama* Project cannot be overestimated, sets out in detail some of the uses and potential of his statistical treatment of *Shahnama* manuscripts, as developed in the concept of mapping the folios. Apart from demonstrating in an unequivocal manner the omission or addition of verses of the poem, or variant versions, Mehran explores the incidence and location of omitted verses as a means of grouping manuscripts, with particular reference to the early 14th-century copies, the so-called 'Small' *Shahnamas*. There remains some ambiguity over the relationship between added and omitted verses, as the natural tendency is for verses to be omitted, for a number of reasons, rather than added deliberately, yet over time, the trend seems to be that the size of the text increases. An important application of mapping is that it allows the reconstruction both of folios that have been tampered with, and of

whole manuscripts that have been dispersed. Mehran demonstrates how separated folios can be conclusively matched again, and in a more complex way, how calculations derived from mapping can estimate the numbers of folios and paintings missing from a damaged text, such as the Great Mongol ('Demotte') *Shahnama*. The analysis is carried out with reference to the critical edition of Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh, perhaps on the premise that it is closest to Firdausi's original text; it is not clear how the arguments would be affected if different editions were used, perhaps showing relatively fewer divergences between the manuscripts and the printed texts.

This was initially to be the second volume of *Shahnama Studies* in the *Pembroke Papers*, before Ingrid Heijckers of Brill in Leiden expressed an interest in taking over the series. After some initial hesitations, the benefits of this arrangement came to outweigh the reluctance to part with something that had I come to see as my personal creation; I am delighted that this will now form the first volume in the reconstituted series, 'Studies in Persian Cultural History', and that Gabrielle van den Berg and Sunil Sharma have agreed to form the editorial board: several other titles are already under consideration. I am also grateful to Ingrid for her patience in awaiting the long delayed submission of the manuscript, and to the authors also for their forbearance. I would also like to acknowledge the helpful comments of the two anonymous reviewers. All the contributions in this volume have been edited by both Gabrielle van den Berg and myself, and I have been responsible for the final preparations of the book for publication. I hope it will prove a worthy start to the second millennium of Firdausi's *Shahnama*.

Charles Melville
Pembroke College
Cambridge
August 2011

PART ONE

THE RECEPTION OF THE *SHAHNAMA*: LATER EPICS

TRACKING THE *SHAHNAMA* TRADITION IN MEDIEVAL PERSIAN FOLK PROSE

Julia Rubanovich

The end of the 9th/15th century is a milestone in the history of the *Shahnama*'s reception. By that time Firdausi's work had attained wide recognition, preeminently expressed in an array of imitations, as well as in the large-scale manuscript reproduction all over the Persian-speaking world. Baysunghur Mirza's undertaking to produce a new and comprehensive recension of the *Shahnama* (completed in 833/1430), including the invented *vita* of the poet, bears a strong witness to the process of canonization both of the epic and of Firdausi himself.¹ The stages in the dissemination of the *Shahnama* in courtly cultural circles prior to Baysunghur's efforts are traceable enough. They are indicated, for example, by the ample use of verse quotations in courtly historical writing, such as the *Rahat al-sudur va ayat al-surur* of Muhammad b. 'Ali Ravandi (completed around 601/1204-5) and the *Tarikh-i jahangusha* of 'Ata Malik Juvaini (completed in 658/1260).² However, in contrast to the court culture, the fortunes of the *Shahnama* in medieval Persian folk literature remain elusive and neglected. Generalized assertions as to the epic's broad popularity in oral tradition are based mainly on scant and mostly oblique references to *shahnama-kh'ans* and *shahnama-kh'ani* in medieval sources and do not take into account the diachronic development of the reception of the *Shahnama*.

This chapter aims to examine the medieval reception of the *Shahnama*, on the basis of evidence that originates in a very specific genre of medieval Persian literature, namely epic romances in prose, or *dastans*. *Dastans* emerged from the beginning in a written medium as a result of compilation, and thus by no means represent oral composition-in-perfor-

¹ See Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh, "Bāysonğori Šāh-nāma". For the text of the fictional biography of Firdausi in the preface to the Baysunghuri *Shahnama* with comments, see Muhammad Amin Riyahi, *Sar-chashma-ha-yi Firdausi-shinasi*, 349-418.

² For the deployment of the *Shahnama* by these two historians see respectively Julie S. Meisami, "The *Šāh-Nāme* as mirror for princes; a study in reception"; Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani, "Conscience du passé et résistance culturelle dans l'Iran Mongol".

mance, as occasionally suggested.³ At the same time, the genre is firmly rooted in the tradition of storytelling (*qissa-kh'vani*)⁴ and as such shows a substantial affinity to oral traditional patterns. These comprise linguistic features typical of spoken discourse (repetitions, referential vagueness, reduced syntactic complexity), and narrative characteristics (linearity, the patterning of narration through storytelling formulas, thematic redundancy, plot ellipses reconstituted by an addressee with recourse to the common reservoir of oral tradition, etc.).⁵ Notwithstanding the obvious methodological difficulty in studying oral tradition through a textual, written channel, Persian epic romances, due to their peculiar location at the oral-textual 'interface', offer a rare glimpse into certain developments in medieval folklore and folk literature, including the reception of the *Shahnama* in these domains.

To accumulate as much evidence as possible, I have examined five voluminous texts that have been edited so far. These are:

- 1) *Darabnama*, attributed to Abu Tahir Tarsusi or Tartusi;⁶
- 2) *Abu Muslimnama*, attributed to the same author;⁷
- 3) *Samak-i 'Ayyar* by Faramarz b. Khudadad Arrajani;⁸
- 4) the anonymous *Iskandarnama*;⁹
- 5) *Firuzshahnama* by Muhammad Bighami.¹⁰

The last work was originally published under the mistaken title *Darabnama*, later emended by the editor himself to *Firuzshahnama*.¹¹ I use the emended title throughout this article.

From a chronological point of view, *dastans* nos. 1 to 3 in the list above were written down presumably in the 6th/12th to early 7th/13th centuries;¹²

³ Yuri Salimov, *Nasri rivoyati*, 115; Muhammad Sarvar-Maula'i, "Bahs-i dar-bara-yi dastan-i *Samak-i 'Ayyar*", 1129-30; Husain 'Ali Baihaqi, *Pazhuhish va barrasi*, 45.

⁴ William Hanaway, "Persian popular romances", esp. 6-7, 228-30; *idem*, "Formal elements", 143-44; Yuri Salimov, *Nasri rivoyati*, 114-18.

⁵ For a detailed discussion of oral features as preserved in the *dastan* genre, see Julia Rubanovich, "Orality in medieval Persian literature", 660-75.

⁶ al-Tarsusi, *Darabnama*. For different versions of the author's *nisba* see Muhammad Ja'far Mahjub, "Sar-guzasht-i hamasi", 201-2 and recently Husain Isma'ili's detailed study: *Abu Muslimnama*, the editor's preface, I, 181-91.

⁷ al-Tartusi, *Abu Muslimnama*.

⁸ al-Arrajani, *Samak-i 'Ayyar*.

⁹ Anonymous, *Iskandarnama*.

¹⁰ Bighami, *Firuzshahnama*.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, II, 765-66.

¹² The most recent discussion of the *Darabnama*'s dating is by Mahmud Omidshah, "*Darabnama*-yi Tarsusi", who places it in the 6th/12th century.

the earliest extant manuscripts, date, however, from a much later period, the 10th/16th century. The anonymous *Iskandarnama* (number 4), originally compiled at the end of the 6th/12th century, underwent a thorough re-working at the hands of a medieval editor/redactor, in all probability in the 8th/14th century.¹³ No. 5, the *Firuzshahnama* of Muhammad Bighami, belongs to the end of the 9th/15th century; the only known manuscript of this work is dated 887/1482 and seems to have been copied from the autograph already in Bighami's lifetime.

The examination of these texts yielded three clusters of testimony pertinent to the *Shahnama*'s reception in medieval times. The first cluster comprises verse interpolations from the *Shahnama* in the prose *dastans*. The second includes the stories inserted in the main narrative of the anonymous *Iskandarnama*, which claim Firdausi's epic as their source. The third cluster deals with evidence from the *Darabnama* of Abu Tahir Tarsusi that suggests the possible existence in the 6th/12th to early 7th/13th centuries of a parallel epic tradition, extraneous to the *Shahnama*.

VERSE QUOTATIONS IN THE *DASTANS*

From the end of the 6th/12th century onwards the technique of poetic insertion (*darj-i shi'r*) was the most common device of enhancing the 'poeticalness' of prose, notably in the literary, i.e., artistic writing (*nasr-i fanni*).¹⁴ At the same time, *dastans*, couched in a simple, unadorned language, were influenced to considerably lesser extent by this tendency. Indeed, the anonymous *Iskandarnama* does not feature a single verse insertion; the *Darabnama* numbers only five passages of ten lines altogether. The lengthy *Samak-i 'Ayyar* (2360 printed pages) contains some 68 instances of verse quotation (247 verses and four hemistiches in all); a sizeable number of these were undoubtedly interpolated by a later copyist or copyists in the 10th/16th century.¹⁵ The *Abu Muslimnama* (1800 printed pages) incorporates 262 citations making up 600 verses and 13 half-lines altogether. The most noteworthy in this regard is the *Firuzshahnama* of Bighami, which in the two-volume edition of 1675 pages comprises about 400 verse quotations, nearly 1,000 verses in all. Sig-

¹³ For the interference of a medieval redactor into the original text of the *dastan* see Julia Rubanovich, "Storytelling and meta-narration", 74-78; *idem*, "The reconstruction of a storytelling event", 235-37.

¹⁴ See for example Julia Rubanovich, "Aspects of medieval intertextuality", 247-48.

¹⁵ Marina Gaillard, *Le livre de Samak-e 'Ayyâr*, 11-12, 106.

nificantly, of the *dastans* mentioned above, the 9th/15th-century *Firuzshahnama* is the only work that interpolates generously from Firdausi's epic, which agrees well with the increasing popularity of the *Shahnama* throughout the 9th/15th century.

To place the use of the *Shahnama* quotations in the *Firuzshahnama* in proper perspective: the verse interpolations in this *dastan* come from an array of poets, the majority of whom are cited with no acknowledgement and are only partially identified by Safa in the footnotes to the edition.¹⁶ The interpolations represent diverse poetic genres—*ghazal*, *qasida*, *ruba'i*, *qit'a*, and, notably, the *masnavi* form: the latter encompasses nearly one third of the sum total of quoted lines of poetry. Together with verses of his own making—all in the *mutaqarib* meter and of fairly inferior quality—Bighami borrowed greatly and typically without acknowledgement, from the *Shahnama* of Firdausi, the poems of Nizami (mostly from *Khusrau va Shirin*, *Haft Paikar* and *Sharafnama*), and to a lesser extent, from the *Garshaspnama* of Asadi-yi Tusi. The borrowings from Nizami's works slightly outweigh the number of interpolations from the *Shahnama*: 116 verses versus 100 verses; these numbers take into account the repetition—twice or three times—of verses. However, judging by the *occurrence* of citing, the share of the borrowings from the *Shahnama* is more substantial and amounts to 51 instances as against 36 from the poems by Nizami. These figures, despite their seemingly technical and tedious character, expose some essential proclivities in the cultural response to the poetic production of Firdausi and Nizami in the 9th/15th century. Although both poets enjoyed an equal measure of popularity—provided one takes quantitative data of overall verses as an indicator—yet the number of citations (51 for Firdausi and 36 for Nizami) suggests different patterns of quotation for the works of the two poets. The majority of Nizami's verses are cited in compact, more or less continuous passages and display insignificant textual variants, at most. The interpolations from the *Shahnama* are distinguished by a high degree of fragmentation and instability, on the verge of the total disintegration of the original. I shall return to this point below.

In order to accentuate and refine our understanding of the *Shahnama*'s reception as it is reflected in the *dastan* of Bighami, I have sorted out the verse interpolations in accordance with their provenance within the epic and presented the findings in the form of a table.

¹⁶ Thus, Zabih-Allah Safa identifies verses by Daqiqi, Kisa'i, Firdausi, Sana'i, Abu'l-Faraj Rumi, 'Am'aq-i Bukhara'i, Adib-i Sabir, Anvari, 'Abd al-Vasi' Jabali, Nizami, Sa'di, Labibi, Hafiz, and Auhadi-yi Maragha'i. However, the majority of the verse insertions are left unidentified.

Table 1. Interpolations from the *Shahnama* in the *Firuzshahnama* of Bighami

Major divisions	Specific <i>dastans</i>	Overall number of verses (with references)	Repeated verses
پادشاهی جمشید		2 (KM, I, 48, vs. 117-118)	
پادشاهی ضحاک		1 (KM, I, 85, vs. 495)	
پادشاهی فریدون		2 (KM, I, 119, vs. 473; KM, I, 157, v. 1068)	
پادشاهی منوچهر		1 (Br, I, 139; cf. KM, I, 171, n. 13)	
پادشاهی کیقباد		1 (KM, I, 348, n. 34)	
پادشاهی کیکاوس		15	
	گفتار اندر هفتخوان رستم زال	1 (Br, II, 338, v. 346)	Repeated thrice (FN I, 80; I, 168; II, 712)
	داستان جنگ هاماوران	2 (KM, II, 86, v. 245; KM, II, 72, v. 75)	
	داستان رستم وسهراب	6 (KM, II, 122, v. 58; KM, II, 194-195, vs. 971-972; KM, II, 171, v. 670; KM, II, 161, n. 13; KM, II, 154, v. 441)	KM, II, 122, v. 58 repeated twice (FN I, 59; II, 241); KM, II, 195, v. 972 repeated twice (FN I, 109; II, 482)
	داستان کین سیاوخش	4 (KM, II, 395, v. 223; KM, II, 405, v. 328; KM, II, 414, v. 455; KM, II, 415, v. 476)	
	داستان رقتن گیو به ترکستان	2 (KM, II, 462, v. 586; KM, II, 432, v. 198)	KM, II, 462, v. 586 repeated twice (FN I, 103; I, 281)
پادشاهی کیخسرو		37	
	گفتار اندر عرض کردن کیخسرو	2 (KM, III, 17, v. 236; KM, III, 18, v. 261)	
	داستان فرود سیاوخش	1 (KM, III, 27, v. 10)	
	داستان کاموس کشانی	11 (KM, III, 183, v. 1287; KM, III, 125, v. 328; KM, III, 181, v. 1256; KM, III, 116, v. 170; KM, III, 123, v. 286; KM, III, 185, v. 1307; KM, III, 125, v. 327; KM, III, 138, v. 532; KM, III, 157, v. 845; KM, III, 176, vs. 1172-1173)	KM, III, 183, v. 1287 repeated twice (FN I, 33; I, 410)

Major divisions	Specific <i>dastans</i>	Overall number of verses (with references)	Repeated verses
	داستان رستم با خاقان چین	11 (Br, IV, 965, n. 10; KM, III, 234, v. 2111; KM, III, 229, v. 2038; Br, IV, 1024, vs. 1089-1090; KM, III, 221, vs. 1905-1906; Br, IV, 1003, v. 734; KM, III, 234, v. 2112; KM, III, 242, vs. 2238-2239)	
	داستان بیژن و منیژه	4 (KM, III, 303, v. 1; KM, III, 303, v. 13, 12, 10)	
	داستان دوازده رخ	4 (Br, V, 1167, v. 505; KM, IV, 7, v. 65; KM, IV, 8, v. 72; KM, IV, 10, v. 115)	Br, V, 1167, v. 505 repeated thrice (FN I, 258; I, 313; I, 431); KM, IV, 8, v. 72 and KM, IV, 10, v. 115 repeated twice each (FN II, 549; II, 591)
	داستان اندر جنگ بزرگ کیخسرو	4 (KM, IV, 232, v. 977; KM, IV, 220, vs. 781-782; KM, IV, 347, v. 2759)	
	پادشاهی گشتاسب	6	
	داستان گشتاسب با ارجاسب	3 (KM, V, 210, v. 1444; KM, V, 214, vs. 1485-1486)	
	داستان هفتخوان اسفندیار	3 (KM, V, 279, v. 728; KM, V, 279, v. 729; KM, V, 241, v. 252)	KM, V, 279, v. 729 repeated twice (FN I, 101; I, 110)
	پادشاهی اسکندر	1 (KM, VI, 5, v. 37)	
	پادشاهی انوشیروان	4 (KM, VII, 246, v. 1903; KM, VII, 349, v. 3249; KM, VII, 135, v. 425, 427)	KM, VII, 246, v. 1903 repeated twice (FN I, 281; II, 564)
	پادشاهی هرمزد انوشیروان	1 (KM, VII, 544, v. 951)	
	پادشاهی خسرو پرویز	3 (KM, VIII, 134, v. 1768; B, IX, 11, vs. 20-21)	

Total: 74 verses. Including with the repeated verses: 84

Note: The table indicates the origin of each poetic line in the major thematic divisions of the epic, that is, the reigns, and where applicable in specific narratives within the reigns. The cases where the verses are repeated two or three

times are also marked. In identifying the verses I relied on the concordance of Muhammad Dabir-Siyāqī, *Kashf al-abyat-i Shahnama-yi Firdausi*. I then verified the verses according to the edition of Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh. In the event that the verses were not found in this edition, I consulted the Moscow edition by Bertel's and the Berukhim printing. I did not address the question of the authenticity of the verses, since it is irrelevant to the present discussion. The following abbreviations are used in the table: KM=Khaleghi-Motlagh's edition; B=Moscow edition; Br=the Berukhim printing; FN=*Firuzshahnama*. The numbers following the abbreviations indicate volume, page, verse (or note).

What can be inferred from the material in the table as regards the reception of the *Shahnama*? First, as far as the provenance of the interpolations is concerned, in the *Firuzshahnama* the quotations extracted from the narratives that form the so-called heroic cycle preponderate, with the stories from the reign of Kay Khusrau represented most richly. Within this reign a particular place is assigned to the tale of Kamus-i Kashani and the story of Rustam's campaign against the Khaqan of Chin (11 verses in each case). The sections of the *Shahnama* that precede the period of Kay Kavus and follow that of Gushtasp get a meager representation at best: the so-called mythological period provides only six verses, and the extensive historical portions, starting with the rule of Iskandar, barely come up to ten verses altogether. Although the tales of Kamus-i Kashani, of Rustam's campaign against the Khaqan or the story of Haft kh^van-i Isfandiyar do indeed agree perfectly with the heroic subject matter of the *Firuzshahnama*, similar thematic materials can be found in abundance also in the reigns of Manuchihr, Iskandar, Bahram Gur, Anushirvan or any of the Shapurs, for instance. To my mind, Bighami's selectivity, rather than expressing his personal predilections, appears to reflect a general current in the reception of the *Shahnama*, which can be traced to at least the second half of the 7th/13th century, as is attested by the available evidence.

Indeed, turning again to the historical works mentioned in the opening section of the article, we can observe that among the over 60 interpolations from the *Shahnama* in Juvaini's *Tarikh-i jahangusha* there are quite a number of verses borrowed from the parts relating to the reign of Kay Khusrau (notably, the tale of Rustam and Suhrab) and to the reign of Gushtasp (the tale of Rustam and Isfandiyar, in particular); as for the verses from the 'post-Gushtaspian' period, I could not track any. Parenthetically, I may note that my findings regarding the *Tarikh-i jahangusha* are consistent with the results of the partial collation of Firdausi's verses

in Juvaini's work undertaken by D. Sajjadi.¹⁷ It would be quite safe to argue for some degree of continuity and stability in the patterns of reception with respect to certain parts of the *Shahnama*, from a diachronic standpoint (that is, from the 7th/13th-century Juvaini to the 9th/15th-century Bighami), as well as from a literary-cultural perspective in general, namely, disregarding the different genre affiliation of the texts (courtly history *versus* popular *dastan*).

Apart from the varied degree of popularity enjoyed by the sections of the *Shahnama*, the perusal of the table reveals a curious tendency towards the recurrence of Firdausi's verses; I have marked ten instances of double and even triple repetition (amounting to 22 verses in all). This finding is important when appraised against the data from the poems of Nizami, in which only one instance of double verse repetition was recorded (FN I, 351; FN II, 591). The recurrent use of Firdausi's verses occurs in similar thematic contexts, which might indicate that the *Shahnama* proves to have been susceptible to a formulaic treatment—typical of oral tradition, one may add—to a much greater degree than the poems of Nizami, for example.¹⁸

Perceiving the epic as a kind of inventory for formulaic usage determines the essential characteristics of verse borrowing from the *Shahnama* in the *dastan*. In this regard two principal approaches of the medieval narrator to the text can be discerned. The most prominent is the fragmentation (or fragmentariness) that I have referred to above. This approach is expressed in the technique of collage, when single verses from various sections of the poem are joined into one thematic string. The collage-like aggregation of verses is encountered in the *Firuzshahnama* in a number of set narrative contexts, such as exhortations on the vicissitudes of fate (FN I, 109, 427; II, 448, 482), depictions of battle scenes (FN I, 101, 107, 110, 279, 281, 688; II, 549, 591), and descriptions of the alternation of day and night (FN I, 103, 106, 130, 281; II, 67, 176, 484, 564). Two examples will suffice to illustrate the idea of fragmentation. The first passage describes nightfall (FN I, 276; the lines are numbered to facilitate reference):

¹⁷ Ziya' al-Din Sajjadi, "*Shahnama dar Tarikh-i jahangusha-yi Juvaini*", esp. 241-42.

¹⁸ Noteworthy in this regard is a late *dastan* *Hamzanama*, which I am not considering here. Three out of five verses borrowed from the *Shahnama*—KM, III, 184, n. 18; KM, VIII, 423, n. 10; Br, I, 257, v. 243 are repeated respectively eleven, four and two times in the same narrative setting.

بیت:

- (1) چو خورشید شد از جهان ناپدید شب تیره بر دشت لشکر کشید
 (2) چو چرخ بلند از شبه تاج کرد همایر بر افکند بر لا جور
 (3) جهان سر بسر همچنان نیل شد ستاره بگردار قندیل شد
 (4) شب تیره چون زلف را تاب داد همان تاب چشم و را خواب داد

Verse:

- (1) When the Sun waned from the world, and the dark night drew its army to the plain
 (2) When the lofty firmament put on a crown of agate, and Huma cast its wing upon the azure,
 (3) The world became dark as indigo, the stars became a chandelier
 (4) When the dark night twisted the curl; that very curl lulled (the night's) eyes to sleep

Verse (1) is borrowed from the tale of Rustam and Suhrab (KM, II, 154, v. 441, where گشت appears instead of شد); verse (2) derives from the story of Kamus-i Kashani (KM, III, 123, v. 286; the original has شامه پراگند instead of همایر بر افکند); verse (4) is from the reign of Hurmuzd (KM, VII, 544, v. 951). The third verse is spurious and was stylized after Firdausi; it must have been composed either by Bighami himself or drawn from some epic poem which I have so far failed to identify.

The second passage depicts a battle between the Iranians and the Rumis (FN II, 549). Oddly enough, Bighami is explicit in attributing the whole section to Firdausi, saying:

چنانک حکیم فردوسی فرماید، بیت:

As Hakim Firdausi says,

The interpolation:

- (1) شده نامور لشکری انجمن یلان سرافراز شمشیر زن
 (2) بخون آب داده همه تیغ را بدان تیغ برنده مرمیغ را
 (3) سپاهی چو دریای جوشان بجنگ همه تیز کرده بکینه دو چنگ
 (4) سپاهی که هنگام ننگ و نبرد ز جیحون بگردون برآرند گرد

(5) سپاهی بکردار پیلان مست که با جنگ ایشان شود کوه پست
(6) سواران شایسته کارزار همه جنگ جوی و همه نامدار

- (1) The renowned army assembled, proud, sword-striking heroes
- (2) They have tempered the swords in blood, they have cut the clouds with the swords
- (3) An army, which in war is like a boiling sea, they have sharpened their claws in fighting
- (4) An army which in the time of battle, shall raise dust from the Jaihun up to the heavens
- (5) An army, resembling the intoxicated elephants, battling with whom razes the mountains to the ground
- (6) Riders, admirable in battles, all are war-seeking and renowned

Verses (1) and (2) are taken from the episode of Anushirvan's battle with Farfuriyus the Rumi (KM, VII, 135, v. 425, 427); verse (3) is of unknown provenance (despite Bighami's ascription to Firdausi); verses (4), (5) and (6) are extracted from the *Dastan-i davazdah rukh*, namely from the episode where Kay Khusrau is made aware of the approach of Afrasiyab's army (KM, IV, 7, v. 65; IV, 8, v. 72 and IV, 10, v. 115 respectively). The second half-line of the last verse differs entirely from Firdausi's original, which reads:

سواران شایسته ی کارزار بیر تا بر آری ز توران دمار

Bring riders, fit for battle, in order to be able to destroy Turan

The modification of the second half-line is occasioned by a narrative need: while in the *Shahnama* the line appears in the context of a dialogue between Kay Khusrau and Luhrasp—hence the imperative (بیر)—in the *Firuzshahnama* the whole passage is put in a descriptive vein. Besides, the mention of Turan in the original was obviously irrelevant to Bighami's story, which takes place in Rum, and thus had to be dispensed with.

It is worth noting that the fragmentary arrangement of *Shahnama* lines differs markedly from the way of interpolating the poetry of Nizami in the *Firuzshahnama*. Nizami's verses are habitually interlaced in continuous, unbroken passages. Hence, in the case of Nizami's quotations, the technique that I termed above 'collage', is limited to four segments, describing the alternation of day and night (see: FN I, 284, 448; II, 330, 591).¹⁹ I shall consider the meaning of such a different attitude in a while.

¹⁹ Cf. Julie S. Meisami, "Rāvandī's *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*", 187; *idem*, "The historian and the poet", 104.

Let me now look at the other mode in which the medieval narrator of the *Firuzshahnama* approached the verse-insertion from the *Shahnama*. In the *dastan* the habitual treatment of Firdausi's verses involves a high degree of instability and variability, especially in comparison with the minor variant readings encountered in the citations from Nizami and Asadi-yi Tusi. Admittedly, although textual flexibility is typical of the *Shahnama* manuscript history on the whole, in the *Firuzshahnama* it reaches somewhat reckless dimensions, resulting in the virtual reshuffling of Firdausi's own creation. The poet's original verses are 'diluted' with stylized lines, either entirely spurious, as we have observed, or based—very partially—on the original. Here are some examples:

(FN I, 190) بکام تو بادا سپهر بلند دلت شاد بادا تنت ارجمند

May the lofty skies be at your will, may your heart be joyful, your body
exquisite

In the *Shahnama* the first half-line appears twice in the tale of Bizhan and Manizha, but with a different ending in both cases:

(KM, III, 344, v. 550) بکام تو بادا سپهر بلند بجان تو هرگز مبادا گزند

May the lofty skies be at your will, may your soul never be hurt!

(KM, III, 372, v. 913) بکام تو بادا سپهر بلند ز چشم بدانت مبادا گزند

May the lofty skies be at your will, may the eyes of the enemies not hurt
you!

The lack of textual fixity contributes to fairly numerous idiosyncratic variants, not listed in any edition of the *Shahnama*. Thus, in the *Firuzshahnama* we read:

(FN I, 101) زبس نیزه و گرز و پولاد و تیغ تو گفתי همی سنگ بارد زمیغ

From the horde of clubs, steel and swords, you would say that stones are
raining from the clouds

where سنگ is a somewhat unsophisticated substitution for ژاله (KM, III, 229, v. 2038).

Or:

همه دشت مغز و پای و دست نبد بر زمین هیچ جای نشست (FN I, 110)

The whole plain [filled with] brain marrow, feet and hands, on earth there was no room to sit [on a horse]

The above reading is not registered in any of the editions. The verse in KM, IV, 232, v. 977 runs as follows:

همه دشت مغز و سر و دست و پای همانا نبد بر زمین نیز جای

The whole plain [filled with] brains, heads, hands and feet, there was no (vacant) space on earth

Yet another example:

شی بود تاریک مانند قیر نه بهرام پیدانه کیوان نه تیر (FN I, 780)

There was a night, dark as pitch, neither Mars was visible, nor Saturn or Mercury

In the original this famous opening verse from the tale of Bizhan and Manizha reads as follows (KM, III, 303, v. 1):

شی چون شبه روی شسته به قیر نه بهرام پیدانه کیوان نه تیر

There was a night like an agate, its face washed in pitch, neither Mars was visible, nor Saturn or Mercury

Let me now draw some preliminary conclusions regarding the function and the meaning of verse interpolations from the *Shahnama* in the *dashtans*. It appears that the practice of interpolating citations from the epic into folk prose narratives gained impetus not earlier than the 9th/15th century. It was probably a catching-up with a similar technique in 'high' literature, which by the 7th/13th century at the latest had acquired a canonical, normative status. The lack of interpolations from Firdausi's *Shahnama* in early *dastans*, such as the *Darabnama*, the anonymous *Iskandarnama* and the *Samak-i 'Ayyar*, seems to bear testimony to a certain indifference, disregard or perhaps ignorance of sorts on the part of popular storytellers, active in the 5th/11th, 6th/12th and early 7th/13th centuries, about Firdausi's *magnum opus*. I shall cautiously propose a hypothesis to the effect that up to the 9th/15th century the literary reception of the *Shahnama* might have been restricted to courtly (or rather, learned) circles, including first and foremost lyric and epic poetry and historical writing, while its infiltration into folk literature in prose spanned a more lengthy period.

To test this and other suggestions raised till now, I shall examine the second cluster of evidence that emerges from another *dastan*, the anonymous *Iskandarnama*.

THE ANONYMOUS *ISKANDARNAMA* AND THE EVIDENCE OF
THE INSERTED STORIES

The *Iskandarnama* provides a rare example of medieval Persian prose, in that it most tangibly reflects the different chronological stages of its production. Above I have referred briefly to the fact that the *dastan*, compiled around the end of the 6th/12th century, actually contains the 8th/14th-century version of the work as we have it now in Iraj Afshar's edition. Since I have dealt with the issue of the *Iskandarnama*'s making elsewhere,²⁰ I shall recapitulate here only those points which may help to further the discussion.

Owing to the extreme paucity of historical hints in the *Iskandarnama* and the incompleteness of the only extant manuscript, which lacks several pages of the beginning and a substantial portion of the final part, the only way to reconstruct the phases in the production of the work is through examining its meta-narrative texture. Careful scrutiny of meta-narrative markers led me to conclude that at least three agents had contributed, consecutively, to the multilayered making of the *dastan*. They are the narrator/compiler, the redactor, and the scribe. Inasmuch as there is no historical background to the *dastan*, the identities of these agents cannot be verified; thus, it cannot be ruled out that the redactor and the scribe were not actually the same person. At all events, while speaking of the functions of the three, the following can be deduced. The narrator's/compiler's presence in the *dastan* is not explicit, but rather emanates from the structural features of the work. A single overt mention of him comes from the redactor who rather brusquely remarks: "The compiler (*jam'avaranda*) of this book recorded here also some stories of the miracles of Jesus, may He rest in peace, which he had found in other books, and most of the people listen to them and read them; [hence] we (i.e., the redactor) also deleted [them] in order not to digress from the Iskandar story and in order that the readers of the story will not lose its thread" (*Iskandarnama*, 352, lines 15-18).

Two important observations can be inferred from this comment. First, it becomes clear that the original, earlier, text of presumably the 6th/12th

²⁰ Rubanovich, "Storytelling and meta-narration", 71-79.

century comprised storytelling material which, following Mia Gerhardt,²¹ I prefer to define as inserted stories. Unlike the frame-stories, the inserted stories are usually shorter and less significant than the principal narrative, in whose framework they are embedded; they are therefore subordinate to it both structurally and contextually. Second, the redactor forthrightly interfered with the original text, deleting and abridging the inserted stories. As I shall demonstrate immediately, in his editorial pursuits the redactor followed specific guidelines that he had drawn up for himself and which have a direct bearing on the question of the *Shahnama's* reception in the 8th/14th century, the period of the redactor's activity.

The number of the inserted stories in the *Iskandarnama*—either related in full or catalogued—comes up to 37 altogether. Nearly all of them are narrated to Iskandar/Alexander by literary characters of professional and amateur storytellers. Among the latter Iskandar's vizier Arastatalis/Aristotle figures most prominently. For our purpose, I shall concentrate on those inserted stories whose provenance in Firdausi's epic is explicitly stated by the redactor himself.

LIST 1: EPIC STORIES IN THE ANONYMOUS *ISKANDARNAMA*

In addition to the subject of the story—or in most cases of a cluster of stories—and the location of the tales in the *dastan*, the list contains comments by the redactor that shed light on his editorial policy. The asterisk marks the tales that were subject to the redactor's interference in some way.

1. *On Zahhak; exploits of Kava the Smith, Afridun, Sam (*sic*, correct: Salm), Tur and the daughter of Sarv-i Yaman; slaughter of Iraj; the reign of Manuchihr (129, lines 12-20):

پس آن مرد [...] جمله با شاه اسکندر بگفت بعینها چنان که در شهنامه فردوسی نظم داده است و اغلب خوانندگان را معلوم باشد و مادرین کتاب الا قصه اسکندر و حکایتی که از نوادر و غر[ایب] باشد باز نمی گوئیم که قصه از اندام بیرون می افتد و خوانندگان ملول می شوند و قصه اسکندر فراموش می کند.

²¹ Mia I. Gerhardt, *The art of story-telling*, 388-89.

Then the man [...] told King Iskandar everything exactly (the way) in which it was versified in Firdausi's *Shahnama*, and (the stories are) known to most of the readers; and we (i.e., the redactor) relate in this book only the tale of Iskandar, as well as rare and extraordinary stories; otherwise the tale would lose its shape and the readers would be bored and forget the tale of Iskandar.

2. The story of the king of Yemen, his wise vizier and the daughter of an Arab king (157, line 10 to 162, line 14 and 162, lines 15-18):

و اگر چه ما گفته ایم که حکایتها وضع می کنیم ازین کتاب، اما حکایتی گفته ایم که مطول
و مشهور باشد و از خواندن آن ملالت و زحمت خاطر بود و حکایتی که غریب تر
و مختصر تر باشد باز گوئیم که بدین قدر کتاب دراز نگردد و از اندام بیرون نشود، و همه
حکایتها که درین کتاب بیاوریم بر پنج طبق کاغذ نیاید.

Although we (i.e., the redactor) said that we delete stories from this book, we meant those stories that are lengthy and well-known and whose reading might cause tedium and nuisance to the mind; however, we shall relate rarer and shorter stories, so that the book won't lose its shape, and all the stories that we relate in this book will not exceed five sheets of paper.²²

... و این حکایت پیش شاهان گفتن سبب آن بود که در خورد بود در خدمت بزرگوار
پادشاه. و این حکایت در شه نامه فردوسی نظم داده است و بر دختر طایر ملک عرب
وارد شیر می نهد، و خدا علیم تراست به درستی آن. و ما اینجا گاه از برای فایده
و مختصری نوشتیم.

... And the reason for relating this story before the kings was that it was appropriate in the service of the great king. Firdausi versified this story in the *Shahnama* and assigns it to the daughter of Ta'ir, the king of the Arabs, and Ardashir; God knows better as for the verity of this (ascription). And we wrote it here because of its utility and shortness.

²² The remark on the physical limits of the manuscript seems to support the suggestion that the redactor indeed could have been the same person as the scribe.

3. * The story of Queen Humay and her son Darab (191, lines 10-13):

حکیم ارسطاطاليس خدمت کرد و حکایت همای چهارآزاد زن بهمن و قصه آنکه پسر را از برای پادشاهی در آب انداخت و به دست گازر افتاد و او را داراب نام کردند و تابه مادر باز رسید و به پادشاهی بنشست بر تخت بهمن اسفندیار چنان که در شهنامه است، باز گفت.

Hakim Arastatalis bowed and related the story of Huma-yi Chihrzad, Bahman's wife, and how she cast her son into water so that he should not reign, and he fell into the hands of a laundryman, and was named Darab, till he returned to his mother and sat on Bahman's throne to reign, as it is told in the *Shahnama*.

4. * The tale of Siyavush, Kay Khusrau and their fight with Afrasiyab (201, lines 10-17):

ارسطاطاليس در آن شب پیش شاه بود و شاه از وی قصه سیاوش و کیخسرو بازخواست و قصه ایشان با افراسیاب. . . . پس حکیم این قصه ها از برای شاه باز گفت چنان که در شهنامه مذکور است و اینجا باز گفتن تطوili دارد و این داستانها خود بر خاطر اغلب مردمان باشد که از شهنامه خوانده باشند. پس حکیم ارسطاطاليس این حکایت باز گفت.

That night Arastatalis was near the King and the King asked him for the story of Siyavush and Kay Khusrau and what happened between them and Afrasiyab... Then Hakim told the King all these stories, as they are mentioned in the *Shahnama*; it would be tedious to relate them here (i.e., in the *Iskandarnama*), and the people who read the *Shahnama* remember these very stories. So, Hakim Arastatalis retold this tale.

5. * Hum captures King Afrasiyab (207, lines 13-16):

و او را (افراسیاب را) من گرفتم و بدست کیخسرو باز دادم و آن قصه با شاه (اسکندر) باز گفت که او را چون گرفتم چنان که در شهنامه منقولست.

"It was me who captured him (i.e., Afrasiyab) and handed him over to Kay Khusrau," and he (i.e., Hum) told King Iskandar that story, to wit: how I captured him, as it is passed on in the *Shahnama*.

6. * Kay Khusrau takes revenge upon Afrasiyab; Kay Khusrau's disappearance (207, line 19 to 208, line 3):

پس حکیم آن داستان با شاه باز گفت از اول تا آخر چنان که در شهنامه به نظم فردوسی
طوسی گفته است. تا بدانجا باز گفت که کیخسرو از میان لشکر برفت و پادشاهی به شاه
لهراسب داد و او ناپدید شد و پهلوانان بعضی که با وی بشدند در زیر برف بماندند.

Then Hakim related that story to the King from the beginning to the end, as it was told in verse in the *Shahnama* by Firdausi-yi Tusi. (He related) up to the place when Kay Khusrau left his army, passed his reign over to King Luhrasb and disappeared; several heroes who went with him remained under the snow.

7. The tale of the King of Farghana and the rule of justice (239, line 1 to 241, line 1):

و این حکایت در شهنامه بر بهرام گور می بندند و در سیر ملوک بر نوشروان عادل
و خدای علیم تر به درستی آن و ما از برای مختصری نوشتیم درین جایگاه.

This story is attached to Bahram-i Gur in the *Shahnama* and to the Righteous Nushirvan in the *Siyar-i muluk*, and God knows better as for the veracity of this (attachment); we (i.e., the redactor) have written it down here because of its brevity.

8. * The story of Gushtasp's exploits in Rum; war with Arjasp; seven trials (*haft khvan*) of Isfandiyar (249, lines 7-13):

پس حکیم قصه گشتاسب و رفتن آن حشم به جانب روم و گایون را به زن کردن و باز
آمدن و بر تخت نشستن و آن هنرها که از شاه گشتاسب در روم ظاهر گشت از کشتن
اژدها و گرگ جمله با شاه (اسکندر) بگفت و در عقب این قصه حکایت جنگ ارجاسب
و صفت هفت خوان اسفندیار و رفتنش به روئین دژ و برون آوردن خواهران را از
بند جمله به شرح چنان که در شهنامه نوشته است باز گفت و اینجا نوشتن درازنای دارد.

Then Hakim related the story of Gushtasp and how this noble went to Rum, married Katayun, returned (to Iran) and ascended the throne; (Hakim) related to King (Iskandar) in full all the exploits which Gushtasp had fulfilled in Rum, namely the killing of the dragon and the wolf; after this story he retold the tale of the war with Arjasp, seven trials of Isfandiyar, how he went to Ru'in Dizh and freed his sisters from captivity. (He

told) everything in detail, as it is written in the *Shahnama*, and to write it here (i.e., the *Iskandarnama*) would cause tediousness.

9. * Tales of Rustam killing Isfandiyar; Suhrab and Rustam; Bahman and Faramarz (249, lines 14-16):

وشاه (اسکندر) هر شب بدین حکایتها مشغول بود و داستان [کشته شدن] اسفندیار بر
دست رستم باز خواست از حکیم وقصه سهراب بارستم وقصه بهمن با فرامرز جمله حکیم باز
گفت...

King Iskandar every night was occupied by (listening) to the stories; he required again from Hakim (to relate) the story of Isfandiyar's [killing] by Rustam; (Hakim) also retold in full the story of Rustam and Suhrab and the story of Bahman and Faramarz...

The number of stories ostensibly inserted into the *dastan* by its original compiler is relatively large, around one fourth of the overall quantity. These are the only tales of epic nature in the *Iskandarnama*, the others pertaining by and large to the *qisas al-anbiya'* genre. Of the nine clusters of stories, the redactor chooses to omit or considerably abridge seven tales. He is guided by a certain "editorial strategy" that implies brevity, narrative homogeneity, and concern for his potential addressees, which involves keeping them fascinated and amused by the rarity of the stories. True to his "editorial strategy" of retaining in full only those stories that are "rarer and briefer", while dispensing with the "lengthy and well-known", the redactor leaves out the tales of Zahhak, Afridun, Salm, Tur and Iraj, Kay Khusrav, Afrasiyab, Siyavush, Gushtasp's adventures in Rum, his war with Arjasp, the Seven Trials of Isfandiyar, Rustam, etc. The only two stories that escape the common lot, because of their contemporary rarity, are those borrowed by the compiler from the Sasanian section of the *Shahnama*: one is the story of King Ardashir and the daughter of Ardavan (no. 2 in the List); the other is the story of Bahram Gur and the gardener's wife (no. 7 in the List). However the redactor, while identifying the source of the former story in Firdausi's *Shahnama*, mistakenly refers to its protagonists as Ardashir and the daughter of the Arab king Ta'ir, thus conflating this episode with the tale of Malika and Shapur Zu'l-Aktaf.²³ Such a conflation could hardly have been possible had the story

²³ *Iskandarnama*, 162. For the story of Malika's love of Shapur Zu'l-Aktaf in the *Shahnama* see KM, VI, 293-99, vs. 25-163.

enjoyed sufficient popularity. As for the tale of Bahram Gur and the gardener's wife, the redactor seems to be at a loss concerning the origin of the story, which in the version of the *Iskandarnama* is connected to the King of Farghana. The redactor assumes a learned stance, attempting to trace a possible source for this story either in the *Shahnama* or in a work belonging to the genre of *siyar al-muluk*, saying: "This story is attached to Bahram-i Gur in the *Shahnama* and to the Righteous Nushiravan in the *Siyar-i muluk*, and God knows better as for the veracity of this (attachment)".²⁴ He thus ignores the essential principle of variation and variability in folklore, which must have guided the original compiler who operated in accordance with the conventions of oral storytelling tradition.

The redactor's treatment of the stories from the *Shahnama* confirms the main conclusions regarding "the rating of popularity" of the epic, which I have suggested on the basis of my analysis of the poetic interpolations in the *Firuzshahnama*. Just as the author of the 9th/15th-century *dastan* draws the majority of his poetic illustrations from the commonly-known—so called "heroic"—parts of the *Shahnama*, either relying on his memory or on some collection of citations in which the verses would have been organized under thematic headings,²⁵ in the same way the redactor of the *Iskandarnama* chooses to delete the tales of the same cycles under the pretext that they are too well-known: "... the people who read the *Shahnama* remember these very stories".²⁶ Thus, the comparison of the approaches of two medieval authors towards the materials from the *Shahnama* yields quite similar results. We can rather safely conclude that in the 8th/14th and 9th/15th centuries there existed some continuity in the patterns of reception, when the main interest and attention were given to the "heroic" part of the *Shahnama*. In contrast, the Sasanian story cycle appears to have been neglected in the folk prose literature, and even the learned redactor of the *Iskandarnama* was not absolutely sure of the details he supplied.

Up to now I have been discussing the attitude of the 8th/14th-century redactor towards the epic of Firdausi. However, what can be said about the original 6th/12th-century compiler of the *Iskandarnama*, who became overshadowed by his energetic successor? What knowledge did the compiler have of the *Shahnama* and was it indeed Firdausi's epic that pro-

²⁴ *Iskandarnama*, 240–41.

²⁵ For such a possibility see Rubanovich, "Aspects of medieval intertextuality", 256–58.

²⁶ *Iskandarnama*, 201.

vided him with the epic stories that he inserted into his version of Iskandar's tale?

Here we find ourselves on shaky ground. Contrary to the redactor, the original compiler did not specify his sources. We are surely dealing with a prose rendition of the epic material, thematically similar to the *Shahnama*, but whether it was derived from Firdausi's text or from some parallel epic traditions still extant in the 6th/12th century, as is amply testified by the anonymous *Mujmal al-tawarikh wa'l-qisas* or by the *Nuzhatnama-yi 'Ala'i* of Shahmardan b. Abi'l-Khair, remains unclear.²⁷ The latter option is not far-fetched. First, the main story of Iskandar in the *dastan* has only a weak connection with the *Shahnama* version and is full of additional subject matter unknown from Firdausi's epic.²⁸ Second, the two inserted stories left intact by the redactor, show considerable discrepancies from the versions found in the *Shahnama*, which comprise modifications in cultural realia, ideological accents and genre transformations.²⁹ In this regard, the redactor's remark—"Firdausi versified this story in the *Shahnama* and assigns it to the daughter of Ta'ir, the king of the Arabs, and Ardashir; God knows better as for the verity of this (ascription)"³⁰—seems to hint at a different source for the original story, betraying the redactor's attempt to bring it into conformity with Firdausi's account, which by his time, that is the 8th/14th century, must have been considered the authoritative version, if not the only existent one.

My assumption concerning the existence in the folk prose of the 8th/14th century of an enduring and vital epic tradition, independent of the *Shahnama*, finds its verification in another *dastan*, the *Darabnama* attributed to Abu Tahir Tarsusi.

THE *DARABNAMA* OF ABU TAHIR TARSUSI AS A WITNESS TO THE EPIC TRADITION, EXTRANEOUS TO THE *SHAHNAMA*

The *Darabnama* relates highly idiosyncratic, atypical stories of Humay, her son Darab and Iskandar, which have virtually nothing in common

²⁷ See respectively Anonymous, *Mujmal al-tawarikh*, f. 2r; Shahmardan, *Nuzhatnama-yi 'Ala'i*, pp. 319-49.

²⁸ For the thematic comparison of the versions of the Iskandar story in the *Iskandarnama* and the *Shahnama* see Rubanovich, *Beyond the literary canon*, appendix 1; a partial comparison can be also found in Hanaway, "Persian popular romances", 71-81, 100-102.

²⁹ For a detailed analysis see Rubanovich, *Beyond the literary canon*, 130-35.

³⁰ *Iskandarnama*, 162.

with the canonical version of Firdausi.³¹ Moreover, the *dastan* contains a wealth of allusions to motives and episodes pertaining to the exploits of various Iranian kings and heroes, which have no parallels in the *Shahnama* and which are often tinted with Islamic colouring. Thus, in the *Darabnama* we find allusions to the episodes of Afridun's crossing the Jabalqa desert on chariots under sails; of the war between Kush-i Fildandan (*sic*) and Sam-i Nariman, King Afridun's champion; of the sinking of Sam-i Nariman's army in the sea of sands during his expedition to India.³² We learn about a faraway island with a fortress on it, erected by Kay Khusrau.³³ We are told about an idol in a Greek temple, who foretold Kay Khusrau his victory over Afrasiyab, as well as about the progeny of a certain Arzu'ad, Pashang's descendant, who built fortresses in the Indian Ocean and dwelt there subsisting on fish,³⁴ etc.

It is certainly possible to assume that the rich imagination of the *Darabnama*'s narrator lead him to invent the motifs in order to connect the kings of Iran and her heroes with the geographical milieu in which he had chosen to set parts of his narrative, namely Greece and India. However, a succinct and economic way of alluding to certain episodes points to the addressees' prior knowledge of the tales to which the narrator referred. The *Darabnama* seems to preserve alternative epic accounts rooted in the multifaceted activity of medieval folk storytellers who were nourished on the ancient layers of Iranian oral tradition, combining it with the elements borrowed from Islamic folklore.

Telling in this respect is the somewhat unusual role given in the *Darabnama* to the figure of an Iranian king Nauzar, who is referred to on two occasions. He is credited with having an illustrious horse, by the name of Shabdiz, who was the equal of the legendary Rakhsh of Rustam.³⁵ According to the *Shahnama*, however, Shabdiz was the name of Khusrau Parviz's faithful stallion, while Nauzar is not known to have had one. In addition, in the *dastan* Nauzar is mentioned among Darab's heroic predecessors, who possessed Jamshid's helmet (*khud-i Jamshid*) in the following manner: "... (Jamshid's helmet) passed from Zakhak to Afridun, from Afridun to Iraj, from Iraj to Nauzar, from Nauzar to Zadsham, from Zadsham to Afrasiyab, from Afrasiyab to Siyavakhsh when the latter went to Turan,

³¹ For the thematic comparison see Rubanovich, *Beyond the literary canon*, appendix 1; a partial comparison can be also found in Hanaway, "Persian popular romances", 71-81, 102-8.

³² See *Darabnama*, II, 306-7; II, 360-61; II, 252 respectively.

³³ *Ibid.*, I, 159.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, I, 236; II, 307 respectively.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, II, 196.

and again it passed from Siyavakhsh to Afrasiyab; when Kay Khusrau defeated Afrasiyab and took his riches, the helmet and (Isfandiyar's coat of mail) fell into Kay Khusrau's hands, and from Kay Khusrau it passed to Luhrasp, from Luhrasp to Gushtasp, from Gushtasp to Isfandiyar, from Isfandiyar to Bahman, from Bahman to Humay, and from Humay it passed over to Darab".³⁶ This otherwise detailed and accurate chain of inheritance oddly omits the name of Manuchihr, Nauzar's father, who in Firdausi's account succeeds to Iraj and supersedes his unfortunate son in every respect. Indeed, the Iranian epic tradition, as we have it today, is unfavorable towards Nauzar, depicting him as a failing ruler whose feebleness brought upon Iran the first alien invasion, that of Afrasiyab.³⁷ A strongly negative attitude to Nauzar is characteristic of modern folk re-workings of the *Shahnama* in prose (*naqqali*) as well.³⁸ Moreover, Pahlavi sources do not list Nauzar among the Iranian kings altogether, for according to them, he was killed by Afrasiyab already during the reign of Manuchihr.³⁹

The relative prominence of Nauzar in the *Darabnama*, unusual in comparison with the extant epic material represented first and foremost by Firdausi's *Shahnama*, hints at the existence in the 6th/12th century of an alternative tradition, which portrayed Nauzar and his family line in a positive light. Such a portrayal might have been shaped under the impact of territorial and/or ethnic considerations; thus, one can suggest that for the circles in which the *Darabnama* was composed, the figure of Nauzar and his successors possessed a special significance, being forefathers, for instance.⁴⁰

³⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 70-71.

³⁷ KM, I, 285-316, vs. 1-451; *Mujmal al-tawarikh*, f. 17r; al-Tha'alibi, *Histoire des rois*, 109-24; see also Zabih-Allah Safa, *Hamasa-sara'i*, 478-80.

³⁸ Jamshid Sadaqat-nizhad, *Tumar-i kuhan*, 12-30; *Haft lashkar*, 156-59.

³⁹ Ehsan Yarshater, "Afrāsīāb", 572.

⁴⁰ In the Avesta, the name of Nauzar functions as a patronymic for his descendants, termed "Naotara". The Naotara are associated with rearing the herds of the swiftest horses in the Iranian lands (Aban Yasht (Yt. V) 98; Art Yasht (Yt. XVII) 55; Naotara are also mentioned in Ram Yasht (Yt. XV) 35, although without being connected with horses; the horse connection is especially interesting, for it may explain the appearance of Nauzar's horse Shabdiz in Tarsusi's *Darabnama*). The tradition reflected in the Avesta binds the Naotara with the Turanians who came to conventionally represent the ultimate foe of Iran (Art Yasht (Yt. XVII, 54, 55); this tie definitely could have caused the shift of emphasis in the image of Nauzar resulting in his later negative characterization.

CONCLUSION

The evidence of the early *dastans* reveals a rather late massive incorporation of the materials from Firdausi's *Shahnama* into folk prose literature, some time in the 8th/14th and 9th/15th centuries. The absorption of the *Shahnama* into the medieval folk milieu appears to have been connected with the canonization of the epic in 'high', courtly literature, in which it came to provide a useful tool for granting legitimacy to non-Iranian, Turco-Mongol rulers.⁴¹ By the 9th/15th century the *Shahnama* of Firdausi had taken its particular place in every stratum of the Persian literary system, and was to keep its singular position throughout the forthcoming centuries. As a result, alternative epic accounts, extraneous to Firdausi's version, have become marginalized, surfacing in the so-called secondary epics and from time to time in the remnants of the once very much alive tradition of *naqqali*.

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DEMONS IN THE PERSIAN EPIC CYCLE: THE *DIV* SHABRANG
IN THE LEIDEN *SHABRANGNAMA* AND
IN *SHAHNAMA* MANUSCRIPTS

Gabrielle van den Berg

The epics of the Persian Epic Cycle, also designated as 'later epics' or 'secondary epics', deal mostly with heroes and their battles with their enemies, amongst whom are often also *divs* (demons). The story of the *div* Shabrang, son of Rustam's formidable adversary the White Div in the *Haft Kh'an*, is the only substantial poem in the Persian Epic Cycle named after a demon. The story of Shabrang is included under a separate heading (*Dastan-i Shabrang*) in Zabih-Allah Safa's *Hamasa-sara'i dar Iran*, and described as 'another story about Rustam'. Safa attributes this story to the poet Azadsarv, who is mentioned in the first verse of this story and to whom Firdausi also refers in the *Shahnama*. Safa mentions the existence of a copy of this story in the British Library; in conclusion, he states that the story was probably composed before the Mongol era.¹ François de Blois also dwells briefly on the *Shabrangnama* in his description of manuscripts of the *Faramarznama*, mentioning it in the context of a British Library manuscript, shelf mark Or. 2926, to which Safa also refers in his description.²

Azadsarv, the alleged author of the *Shabrangnama*, is described by Khaleghi-Motlagh as a scholar from the entourage of Ahmad ibn Sahl, who died in 307/920, the governor of Marv in the second half of the 9th century. According to Khaleghi-Motlagh, Azadsarv has been identified as the source of three stories: the story of Rustam and Shaghad, the *Faramarznama* and the *Shabrangnama*. The first story is part of the *Shahnama* and Firdausi refers in the introduction to this story to Azadsarv, as mentioned by Safa. The other two stories do not form part of the *Shahnama*. In both of these Azadsarv is introduced as the author. In the opening lines

¹ Z. Safa, *Hamasa-sara'i dar Iran*, 323.

² F. de Blois, *Persian literature*, vol. V, part 2, 572: "London Or. 2926, a heavily interpolated copy of the Shahnamah, contains, apart from the 'small Faramarznamah' also the story of the demon Shabrang (fol. 146a-167b) and his battles with Rustam and Faramarz, this also on the supposed authority of Azad Sarw (....)."

of the *Faramarznama* as 'the cypress of Mahan of Marv' and in the *Shabrangnama* as 'the foremost lamp of Mahan of Marv'. Mahan is believed by Khaleghi to be identical to Mir Mahan, a suburban village of Marv.³

The above-mentioned sources on the *Shabrangnama* (Safa, de Blois and Khaleghi-Motlagh) base their information on a single *Shahnama* manuscript in the British Library. This heavily interpolated manuscript, Or. 2926, is dated 1246-49/1830-33. It has 349 folios and according to the colophon has been produced in Shiraz. It contains no less than nine interpolated stories, listed by Charles Rieu as follows:⁴

1. the *Garshaspnama* [ff. 15r-54v],
2. the *Samnama* [ff. 63r-93r],
3. the story of Rustam and Kuk-i Kuhzad [ff. 107v-112v],
4. a story, or maybe rather a collection of episodes, on Rustam and the Babr-i bayan, on the birth of Faramarz and on Rustam and sea-monster Batyara [ff. 112v-123r],
5. then our story on Shabrang [ff. 146r-167v],
6. followed immediately by the *Faramarznama* [ff. 167v-179v],
7. a sequel to the story of Rustam and Suhrab, featuring Tahmina, who in this story gives birth to Faramarz [ff. 191r-192v]
8. the story of Barzu [ff. 193r-221v]
9. and finally the episode of Banu Gushasp [ff. 249v-251r].

In between the interpolations, which often flow into each other, the manuscript includes the first half of the *Shahnama*. The second half of the *Shahnama* up to the death of Yazdagird can be found in a volume assumed to be the continuation of Or. 2926, Or. 2976, written in the same hand, and dated 1252/1836 (275 folios). This second volume contains 2 interpolations:

1. the *Azarbarzinnama* [ff. 59v-62r]
2. and the *Bahmannama* [ff. 62r-133r].⁵

Both Or. 2926 and Or. 2976 contain nine miniatures, and a large number of blank spaces, occupying about half the page. Four of the nine illustra-

³ Dj. Khaleghi-Motlagh "Azadsarv", 178.

⁴ Ch. Rieu, *Supplement to the catalogue of Persian manuscripts in the British Museum*, 129-32 (no. 196, 129-31 and no. 197, 131-32).

⁵ Rieu, *Supplement*, 131-32.

tions in Or. 2926 depict the *Haft Kh'an*.⁶ The story of Shabrang has been illustrated too, and this illustration on folio 153v has been described by Norah Titley as 'Rustam and Faramurz defeating Shabrang, the son of the White Div, in Mazandaran'.⁷

In the British Library there is another *Shahnama* manuscript with a *Shabrangnama* that has gone unnoted so far. This manuscript, I.O. Islamic 3263, has been described in Hermann Ethé's catalogue as defective, incomplete and undated.⁸ It contains 456 folios, which seem to be jumbled. It has been examined in more detail by Marjolijn van Zutphen, who lists a *Garshaspnama* and a mixed up *Faramarznama* amongst the *Shahnama* parts.⁹ In between the *Faramarznama* parts a *Shabrangnama* can be found, on folios 397r-405v and on folios 415r-434r. This version of the story of Shabrang seems to be positioned in the reign of Kay Khusrau, rather than Kay Kavus, as in Or. 2926. Basil Robinson has described the 23 miniatures of this manuscript as late 17th century, in Isfahan style and he attributes one of these to the *Shabrangnama* (on folio 398v).¹⁰ However, it appears that this painting belongs to the *Faramarznama* and has been glued on a text page of the *Shabrangnama*.

Except for these two British Library manuscripts, there is a *Shahnama* manuscript in the Astan-i Quds-i Razavi Library of Mashhad (Ms. 4248), which contains a *Shabrangnama*. It is described in the *Shahnama Project Database* as Qajar and coming from Iran, although some of the individual pictures have been described as Indian. This incomplete manuscript has 417 folios and 59 illustrations; it is dated 26 Rabi' I, 1212/18 September 1797.¹¹ It seems to contain a number of interpolations, amongst them the *Bahmannama*, which is probably in the first part of this manuscript and the *Shabrangnama* (between folio 231 and folio 276, and certainly on folios 238-255). The *Shahnama Project Database* counts five images of

⁶ These are: Rakhsh fighting the lion; Rustam and Rakhsh fighting the dragon; Rustam capturing Aulad; and Rustam fighting the White Div.

⁷ N. Titley, *Miniatures from Persian manuscripts*, 51, no. 118 (Or. 2926) and 119 (Or. 2976).

⁸ H. Ethé, *Catalogue of the Persian manuscripts in the library of the India Office*, I, 551, no. 870.

⁹ Marjolijn van Zutphen, personal communication. See also her chapter in this volume.

¹⁰ B. Robinson, *Persian paintings in the India Office Library*, 226-31, nos. 1152-74; Shabrang, 227, no. 1173.

¹¹ For a description of this manuscript, see Ahmad Gulchin-i Ma'ani, *Fihrist-i kutub-i khatti-yi kitabhkhana-yi Astan-i quds*, 601-2 (no. 649) and Muhammad Vafadar Muradi, *Ma'rifat al-athar*, 57-62.

illustrations from the *Shabrangnama* present in Ms. 4248.¹² They are described as scenes from the *Faramarznama* or as unknown scenes and depict mostly battles between men and demons.

THE LEIDEN UNIVERSITY LIBRARY *SHABRANGNAMA*

Apart from these instances of interpolated *Shabrangnamas* in *Shahnama* manuscripts, there is one separate *Shabrangnama* manuscript, kept in the University Library of Leiden under the title *Shabrangnama*, shelf mark Acad. 150. In the supplement to his *Persian Literature* de Blois mentions this manuscript in connection with his description of the *Faramarznama*.¹³ This manuscript has been paginated and contains 252 pages (127 folios). According to the colophon it was copied by an 'Abd-Allah ibn Salih, on 5 Safar, but there is no mention of the year. The owner's mark gives the date 1062/1652, though De Jong states in his catalogue of the Leiden oriental manuscripts that this manuscript must be older. It has been described by De Jong as the history of Rustam and his son Faramurz (Faramarz) in Mazandaran and India. He notices that the text is similar to Firdausi, but different from the *Shahnama* and that this text treats many subjects that cannot be found in the *Shahnama*. He explains that the author must have given his work the title *Shabrangnama*, because *Shabrang* features so often in the poem. About the provenance of the manuscript, De Jong states that it comes from the library of Joannes Willmet, whose name has been written on the inside cover of the manuscript with the year 1780 (fig. 1, see pl. 1).¹⁴

Joannes Willmet was born in Amsterdam in the year 1750. He was both vicar and orientalist, and taught at the Universities of Harderwijk and Amsterdam until his death in 1835.¹⁵ Joannes Willmet is famous for having gathered the second-largest collection of oriental manuscripts—265 non-western manuscripts—in the Netherlands.¹⁶ His collection belongs to the Royal Academy of Arts and Sciences in Amsterdam; however, it is

¹² On ff. 238, 244, 246, 248, 255. An edition on the basis of the known copies of the *Shabrangnama* is currently being prepared by Abolfazl Khatibi and Gabrielle van den Berg.

¹³ de Blois, *Persian literature*, V, part 3, addenda, 638, note to 572.

¹⁴ P. de Jong, *Catalogus codicum orientalium*, 218-19, no. 166.

¹⁵ Jan Nat, *De studie van de oostersche talen in Nederland in de 18e en 19e eeuw*, 102-3.

¹⁶ After the Legatum Warnerianum: Levinus Warner (1619-65) was a student of Golius and collected manuscripts in Istanbul and elsewhere in the Middle East.

given on permanent loan to the University Library of Leiden.¹⁷ Willmet is said to have obtained this manuscript from his former teacher at Leiden University, Jan Jacob Schultens (1716-78)¹⁸, whose private library was auctioned in 1780¹⁹, the year noted by Willmet in the manuscript. As stated in the catalogues by de Jong and Witkam, the manuscript can be traced back to the private collection of Jacob Golius (1596-1667).²⁰ In the 1696 auction catalogue of Golius' book collection, the manuscript is listed under *Miscellanei in Quarto*, no. 77: *Historia rerum gestarum à Rege Sjebrenek contra Anthropophagos*.²¹

The manuscript is written in *nasta'liq* in two columns, which are placed diagonally, the half lines have been written after one another in one and the same column (fig. 2, pl. 2).²² Each column has seven verses and the two columns are separated by two verses, written vertically. When no titles occur on a page, each page has 16 verses. The titles are in red and occupy the space of one verse. The text is not framed by any lines. The manuscript is bound in a leather cover with an emblem. It is 16.5 cm long and 10.5 cm wide, and the text block is 12 cm long and 7 cm wide.

The first 15 verses of the manuscript, taking up the whole of folio 1v, form the prelude to the story of Shabrang, beginning with the following verse:

تو کوته زمان و زمانه دراز	الا آی شده غرق دریای آز
که با تو زمانه کند ریشخند	دل اندر سرای سپنجی مبد

Oh you drowned in the sea of greed, your time is short and time itself is long

Do not attach your heart to this passing place, for fate will laugh at you

The last writing on folio 1v is a title: *aghaz-i dastan-i shabrang va div-i mazandaran*, 'the beginning of the story of Shabrang and the *divs* of Mazandaran'.

The story proper starts then on folio 2r, with the first verses:

¹⁷ Jan Schmidt, "Between author and library shelf", 27.

¹⁸ J.J. Witkam, "Operatie geslaagd, patiënt overleden", 230.

¹⁹ Schmidt, "Between author and library shelf", 40.

²⁰ J.J. Witkam, *Inventory of Persian manuscripts*, 292-93.

²¹ *Catalogus insignium in omni facultate, linguisque, Arabica, Persica, Turcica, Chinensi &c*, 21, no. 77.

²² This rule has been abandoned on only one folio.

کنون بشنوا ز گفته زاد سرو چراغ صف صدر ماهان به مرو
که چون شده مازندران پور زال برآورد از دیو جاد و زوال

Now listen to what Zadsarv has said, the foremost lamp of Mahan of Marv,
How the son of Zal went to Mazandaran, and how he caused the downfall
of the wizard-demon

These verses can also be found, with some minor variants, in the British Library manuscript Or. 2926, where the *Shabrangnama* starts on folio 146r.²³ In Or. 2926 the prelude to the story of Shabrang is also included, so the incipit is in fact exactly the same as in Acad. 150.²⁴ The prelude in Or. 2926 begins on a new folio, 146r, and is preceded by the episode of Rustam fighting the warrior Alkus from the *Shahnama*. In the *Shahnama*, this very last episode from the *Jang-i Hamavaran* precedes the story of Rustam and Suhrab.²⁵

The last *Shahnama* verse before the beginning of the *Shabrangnama* in Or. 2926 is:

سخنهای برین داستان شده به کن (sic) چنان چون آمد ز بالا سخن

The words of this story have come to an end, since words came down from above.²⁶

This verse is followed by a transition verse:

چه پرداخته گشتم ازین داستان که بشنیدم از گفته باستان

Since I have done with this story, which I heard from ancient tale...²⁷

The verses of the *Shabrangnama* in the British Library manuscripts Or. 2926 and I.O. Islamic 3263 seem to be largely identical to the *Shabrangnama* in Acad. 150. The headings, however, are often different and more descriptive in Or. 2926. The *Shabrangnama* in Acad. 150 has 47 headings,²⁸

²³ Title: *zadan-i shabrang pisar-i sipid div az madar va pursidan-i nizhad-i khud azu va guftan-i madar ki tu pisar-i div-i sipidi va amadan ba mazandaran* (Or. 2926, f. 146r).

²⁴ Contrary to the statement of de Blois in his note on Acad. 150 in *Persian literature*, V, part 3, 638.

²⁵ Chapter 12b, *Shahnama*, Mohl edition.

²⁶ Or. 2926, f. 145v, penultimate verse. The text should probably read 'bun'.

²⁷ Or. 2926, f. 145v, last verse.

²⁸ Acad. 150 has 72 headings if the *Faramarznama* is also included.

while the *Shabrangnama* in Or. 2926 has 27. The *Shabrangnama* part of Or. 2926, which is more recent than that of Acad. 150, has about 2775 verses,²⁹ while the *Shabrangnama* in Acad. 150 takes up 2660.³⁰ The *Shabrangnama* in I.O. Islamic 3263 counts roughly 2700 verses; 29 headings with a title and 12 empty spaces for title headings.

THE CONTEXT AND CONNECTION OF THE STORY OF SHABRANG TO
THE *SHAHNAMA*

Although the *Shabrangnama* has been placed in Or. 2926 after the episode *Jang-i Hamavaran*, it is obvious that the *Shabrangnama* is in fact a continuation of the preceding episode, the *Jang-i Mazandaran*. The starting point of the *Shabrangnama* is the end of the war in Mazandaran, which started when Kay Kavus, just proclaimed king of Iran, unwisely planned to conquer the king of Mazandaran and his land, against the advice of Zal. He ended up as a captive of the King of Mazandaran, who blinded him and his warriors. Kay Kavus, however, succeeded in sending a message to Zal and Rustam asking them to rescue him. Rustam accordingly set out for Mazandaran, taking the short cut and thus performing along the route his *Haft Khʿan* or seven labours.

Rustam's fifth labour is the capture of Aulad, who is described in the *Shahnama* as a brave warrior, the ruler of the border lands where Rustam is travelling at that moment. Aulad, warned by one of his servants who guards the fields, sees that Rustam has been trampling the land. When Aulad comes with a few of his men to ask Rustam about his doings, he is captured by Rustam's lasso. Rustam promises to set Aulad free and to reward him if he serves Rustam as a loyal guide to the dwelling place of the White Div, where Kay Kavus is held captive. First of all Arzhang, general of an army of demons and one of the warriors of the White Div, needs to be defeated. Rustam ties Aulad to a tree and attacks Arzhang. This is Rustam's sixth labour, and when he has fulfilled this task, they travel further to the cave of the White Div. Again he is guided by Aulad, who advises Rustam to wait until the sun is high, for at that moment the demons are asleep. Aulad is tied again to a tree, while Rustam is dealing with the White Div. This scene, Rustam's seventh labour, is very often

²⁹ I counted 2774 verses.

³⁰ I counted 2655 verses.

illustrated in *Shahnama* manuscripts: according to Farhad Mehran this is the most frequently illustrated episode of the *Shahnama* at all times.³¹

In some *Shahnama* manuscripts, Aulad is pictured as a *div*, both in the illustration of the fifth labour of Rustam, in which Rustam captures Aulad, and in the depiction of the famous seventh labour, when Rustam kills the White Div. In the *Shahnama Project Database* there are a number of illustrations where Aulad is depicted as a brown *div* or as a brown speckled *div*, in one case as a yellow *div*.³² The illustrations in which Aulad is depicted as a *div* belong to manuscripts from the 18th or 19th century, mainly from North India or Kashmir, although Aulad is also a brown *div* in a manuscript from Herat, now in the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art, dated 1016/1607.³³ Also in many dictionaries Aulad is described as a demon.³⁴

In the *Haft Khʿan* episode of the *Shahnama*, when finally the White Div has been defeated, Aulad asks for his reward, and Rustam promises him to hand over Mazandaran, on the condition that they manage to rob the King of Mazandaran of his power. When Rustam has freed Kavus and the Iranian warriors, a correspondence is conducted with the King of Mazandaran, who is seriously weakened by the loss of his ally, the White Div. In the end, another battle cannot be avoided. In this battle, the King of Mazandaran transforms into a rock, but is subsequently killed, and this is the end of the war. Rustam makes sure that Aulad is given the rule over Mazandaran, and Rustam and Kavus go back to Iran, in the certainty that Aulad will act as a vassal of Kavus. This is the end of the episode of the *Haft Khʿan* in the *Shahnama*.

The *Shabrangnama* in Acad. 150 takes up at this point. After a page of advisory verses (*pand*) in which the transience of the world is described, on the second page the story's context is made clear. It is briefly related

³¹ Farhad Mehran, "The break-line verse", 155.

³² For example in Ms. 1551, Trinity College, Dublin, dated 1734, both in Rustam's 5th labour, f. 81v (yellow) and 7th labour, f. 83v (brown); Ms. Minutoli 134, Staatsbibliothek Berlin, dated 1830, both in Rustam's 5th labour, f. 66v (brown speckled) and 7th labour, f. 68r (brown speckled with shorts); also in Ms. III. G.68bis, Naples, 18th century, f. 100r, 5th labour, brown, no illustration in this manuscript for 7th labour; and in 1998-7-21-02, British Museum, 7th labour, no image available but brown according to description in *Shahnama Project Database*.

³³ Ms 13.228.16, f. 76r. This in the illustration of Rustam's 5th labour: he lassoes Aulad.

³⁴ F. Steingass: 'Ulad, name of a certain demon, Rustam's guide in Mazandaran'. *Persian-English dictionary*, 121; probably on the authority of Persian-Persian dictionaries, such as the *Burhan-i qati'*, 187, where it is stated: *Aulad nam-i divi buda ast az mazandaran*.

how Rustam has conquered the White Div, what he has done with the king of Mazandaran and how he left Aulad in charge. It is related that the White Div had a lady in his harem, related to the kings of Mazandaran. At the time of the White Div's death, this lady was seven months pregnant. She fled from Aulad through a dark cave and hid somewhere in the city, where after some months she gave birth to a son. Aulad tried to trace her, but without success. Her son is pitch-black and his hair stands out as a thorn bush over the whole of his body. He has two teeth like elephant's tusks, and his face is as black as the river Nile. His mother takes him out of Mazandaran, and raises him in isolation on a mountain. He grows up rapidly, and is fully grown after one year, and after ten years he is like the Alburz mountains. He is built, so it is said, for battle: all fear him. Inevitably, he asks his mother about his father and where he came from, since he has noticed that he is not humanlike. His mother tells him that he is the son of the White Div, who has perished at the hands of a prince from Iran, together with a troop of other *divs*. Shabrang is furious and determined to take revenge. His mother warns him of Rustam, who according to her cannot be defeated. Shabrang departs for Mazandaran, where a great crowd comes to watch in fear of his strange appearance. He asks for wine and food and is received by a host (later named Tuhmaz) in the city, whom he asks many questions about the king of Mazandaran and Rustam. Aulad, now Auladshah, is described as the king, while Rustam is praised as the king of Zabul. This praise infuriates Shabrang. In the meantime, Aulad has been informed of the coming of Shabrang. He sends a messenger with some soldiers to Shabrang, who is not interested in negotiations. The messenger and the soldiers are attacked. A battle between Aulad and Shabrang begins. Very soon it becomes clear that Aulad will be defeated. However, a warrior named Jurjas volunteers to attack Shabrang, but is not so eager anymore when he hears Shabrang's words of revenge. A number of battles follow, and ultimately Aulad's head is split in two by Shabrang. The inhabitants of Mazandaran turn to Mahyar, the mother of Shabrang. Mahyar is proclaimed queen of Mazandaran, and Shabrang becomes commander of the army. Mazandaran rejoices in the new queen:

The world rejoiced in Mahyar, for she reminded them of the former kings
The savage div was willing to serve her, because he knew that she possessed the *farr-i kayan* (the glory of the Kayanid kings).³⁵

³⁵ Acad. 150, f. 13r (p. 24).

Six months pass, and Mahyar proposes to Shabrang to gather a great army in order to achieve his goal and avenge his father. An army is prepared to attack Iran. In the meantime Kavus is informed of the downfall of Aulad. The harem of Aulad is reported to be very sad. Aulad's son, named Zang or Zanga, has departed to Iran in order to call upon Kavus. Zanga informs Kavus of the plans of Shabrang, and tells the king about his determination to take revenge for the murder of his father. He asks for help, and addresses Gudarz, who thinks no one but Rustam can beat a *div* such as Shabrang. A messenger is sent to fetch Rustam from Zabulistan, and to say to him:

From the offspring of wizards, a wizard has come to Mazandaran
Elephants have no trunk comparable to his, the world is in fear because
of his evil appearance.³⁶

Rustam is asked to bring an end to this *jadustan*, this land infested by sorcerers. He is helped by his brother Zavara and his son Faramarz. Rustam is praised here as the one who has shed blood in Hamavaran and the one who has conquered Mazandaran, and whose ancestors go back to Garshasp. Also Bizhan is informed of Shabrang's foul deeds. Bizhan and Rustam arrive at Kavus' court, and Rustam reassures Kavus; he has no fear of Shabrang. After a week of feasting, Rustam and a host of Iranian warriors set out for Gilan. It appears that in the meantime Shabrang has departed for Tisfun (Ctesiphon), often written as Tifsun, which is explained in the text as the present-day Baghdad. In Baghdad Shabrang fights with Zanga Shavaran. Rustam and his army join him. Giv kills the *div* Pilgush, from the camp of Shabrang. More *divs* come forward, named Rashnavad, Kalahur and Faraghan—Giv beats them all. After this, Rustam fights Shabrang, and tells Shabrang that fighting *divs* is like having a banquet for him. Shabrang loses courage and tries to strike some kind of bargain with Rustam, who replies that Shabrang is too much of a threat for Kavus, and that he has no choice but to crush him, or enslave him. The battle goes on and on, and Rustam gets tired. He is then helped by Faramarz, who takes over the fight with Shabrang, and two other *divs*, Kuhmaz and Bahur. These two are killed and Shabrang grows desperate, for he runs short of warriors—no 'warrior trunk' is left.³⁷

The *div* Farahan advises him to write a letter to a formidable *div* who lives in a cave in the mountains. His huge body entirely obscures the cave.

³⁶ Acad. 150, f. 16r (p. 30).

³⁷ Acad. 150, f. 37r (p. 72).

This demon named Farasan comes speedily to help the remaining *divs* and other *divs* also come to battle. All prepare for the renewed battle, which is going to take place on the doorstep of the city Tisfun. Bizhan fights the mighty *div* Kar, whom after a long battle he finally manages to kill, to the grief of Farasan and Shabrang. Another battle takes place between the *div* Ghuchi and a warrior from the Iranian camp called Qarakhan. After beheading Ghuchi, yet another strong *div* appears, named Zhush. This Zhush, coming from the very centre of Mazandaran, has no weapons and no horse, is clad in iron and has a black body and white hair. Even though lions and mountains tremble when he is seen, Rustam has no trouble in defeating him, without using weapons. Farasan begins to feel uneasy, seeing this incredible strength. It begins to dawn on him that *divs* only have tricks and ruses, while Rustam and his men know their jobs. Luckily another *div* appears, named Karband, who is laughed at by Rustam. Both parties call each other names, but ultimately Rustam is victorious. In the meantime a great battle has begun, which goes on until nightfall. The last ones to retreat are Shabrang and Faramarz. Both parties sustain heavy losses; on the Iranian side the number 6,000 is given. Farahan is captured by the Iranians and a nocturnal attack by Shabrang is expected; nevertheless, it still comes as a surprise, although to no effect. Shabrang employs the sorcerer Jalivar, who conjures heavy snowfall. Rustam and his men are buried in snow, but still they do not give up and fight on. Shabrang then urges his *divs* to retreat and commands them to go back to where they come from. He himself disappears as well, much to the distress of Faramarz, who regards this as his failure. He follows Shabrang, accompanied by Giv and Gurgin. They meet once more with Shabrang, and also with a six-headed demon—but Shabrang is too cunning to be caught.

After consultations with Rustam, it is decided that Faramarz is to approach Shabrang's mother, Mahyar, the present queen of Mazandaran. Mahyar tries to lure the Iranians into her trap by first acting in a very friendly manner, only to attack later. She is defeated in Mazandaran and taken to Kavus. She commands those who remain behind to stay on the lookout for Shabrang. When they reach the court of Kavus, they are received in great splendour. Kavus is surprised by the large amount of booty and captives, and the prize captives Farahan and Mahyar. Mahyar is treated in a very friendly way by the court and reassured by Kavus that her chains will be taken off. A long feast begins, and it is during the festivities that the drunken Bahram, son of Gudarz, perceives Mahyar and

falls in love. Bizhan acts as an intermediary between Bahram and Rustam. After some deliberations, Rustam and Kavus agree to give away Mahyar to Bahram. The feast following their union seems to be end of the story of Shabrang, of whom nothing more is heard; he has disappeared from sight.

Without much of a transition, a new story starts on folio 86r (p. 170). The court is feasting, as it was at what appears to be the end of the *Shabrangnama*, and during the merriment a letter arrives from Naushad from India, raising the alarm. He is pestered by a number of evils, such as a speaking rhinoceros, a dragon and yet another *div* by the name of Kunas. Faramarz volunteers to help him, and this brings us to the next part of this manuscript, the beginning of the story of Faramarz and how he went to the king of India.³⁸

Shabrang does not play any role in the remainder of the Leiden manuscript Acad. 150, that is, the *Faramarznama*. There does not seem to be any relation between the two stories, apart from the fact that Faramarz figures in both of them, though less extensively in the *Shabrangnama*, which is basically a story of another heroic feat of Rustam.

The *Faramarznama* contained in Acad. 150 is what has been described as the older version, or the short version of the *Faramarznama*, which was modeled after Firdausi's account of Rustam's *Haft Khvan*. Faramarz's trials end with the conversion of the Brahman Kaid-i hindi, who is turned into a Muslim. In the longer version of the *Faramarznama*, Faramarz also fights a *div* who is named Siyahdiv, a name also sometimes given to Shabrang. However, this story is different from that of Shabrang.

CONCLUSION

Though the *Shabrangnama* is unique in its subject matter and rarely found, be it as a separate work such as in Acad.150 or as an interpolation in *Shahnama* manuscripts, it follows a pattern visible in many Persian Epic Cycle poems. A story that has seemingly found an end in the *Shahnama*, is taken up again and a sequel is composed, which often may lead to another sequel. Shabrang is still walking somewhere, 'to be continued' as it were, even though in the land of Mazandaran once more an ally of the Iranians firmly rules. And so it should be: in the world of the

³⁸ The title can be found on f. 90r (p. 176): *Aghaz-i dastan-i Faramarz ba padsha-yi hind raftan*.

Persian Epic Cycle all is focused on the establishing or reestablishing of Iranian supremacy, by the hands of the omnipotent champion Rustam.

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FARAMARZ'S EXPEDITION TO QANNUJ AND KHARGAH:
MUTUAL INFLUENCES OF THE *SHAHNAMA*
AND THE LONGER *FARAMARZNAMA*

Marjolijn van Zutphen

In the centuries following the appearance of the *Shahnama*, a number of epic poems have been written, which collectively form the corpus generally referred to as the Persian Epic Cycle. These poems were composed between the mid-11th and early 14th centuries AD by often anonymous authors with the aim to both complement and emulate the *Shahnama*. As such, they have the *mutaqarib* metre, follow the rhyme scheme aa, bb, cc, *etcetera* and include heroes and kings known from Firdausi. Described by de Blois as epics that “expound on episodes not included in the *Šah-nama* or touched upon only briefly there”,¹ their eponymous heroes belong to or are closely involved with the dynasty of the heroes of Sistan, the ancestors and offspring of Rustam. The different poems vary in length from around several hundred to tens of thousands of verses, whilst most titles apply to epics that exist in more than one version. Many of the poems can be found as separate works, but they may also appear as interpolations in *Shahnama* manuscripts.²

A well-known Persian epic character is Faramarz. A son of Rustam, Faramarz in the first place appears in several episodes of Firdausi's *Shahnama*. He further features in a number of poems from the Persian epic cycle, most extensively in the *Faramarznama*. Rather confusingly, this title applies to two distinctly different poems, one exceeding the other by more than three times in length. Both *Faramarznamas* were composed by unknown authors and are thought to date from the late 11th or early 12th centuries. Although they are set in different periods and tell completely different stories, both poems deal with Faramarz's various adventures in India. This article deals with the lengthier of the two epics, which is referred to here as the longer *Faramarznama*.

¹ de Blois, “Epics”, 475.

² For more information on the later epics, see Molé, “L'épopée iranienne après Firdōsi”. Safa, *Hamasa-sara'i dar Iran*, 283-342, discusses 16 different later epics, but even more poems may be reckoned part of the corpus.

The first section of the longer *Faramarznama* may be considered a continuation of a particular *Shahnama* episode. This episode tells how the newly installed Kay Khusrau sends Faramarz to conquer the region lying between Zabulistan and Qannuj. In a number of *Shahnama* versions, such as Macan's edition, this region is indicated more specifically as Khargah. Once Faramarz has departed with his army, however, the *Shahnama* makes no more mention of this expedition or its outcome. This hiatus is filled by the longer *Faramarznama*. Three different versions are known to exist of this epic as a separate story. Furthermore, it can be found in abbreviated form in four *Shahnama* manuscripts as an interpolation.

The intention of this chapter is to give an impression of the reception of the *Shahnama* within the context of the Persian epic cycle, as exemplified by the longer *Faramarznama*. By means of a discussion of the *Shahnama* episode in which Faramarz is sent to India and of the first section of the longer version, it is shown how the two stories are connected: additions made to later versions of both epics demonstrate how they apparently were subject to mutual influences. At the same time, examples are presented of how these two poems, each in their own way, exist in a number of various forms and can both be regarded as fluid texts.

FARAMARZ'S INDIAN EXPEDITION IN THE *SHAHNAMA*

The *Shahnama* text that has been used as the main frame of reference in this chapter is the one edited by Khaleghi-Motlagh.³ This edition has been based upon 15 of the oldest known *Shahnama* manuscripts, which all date from before 1500 and which the editor considered the most reliable.⁴ Free of the additions of later centuries, the text may be considered, as far as possible, as the best representation of Firdausi's original version. Of course, more than two centuries lie between the supposed date of completion of the *Shahnama*, in 1010 AD,⁵ and its oldest known written

³ *Shahnama*, ed. Dj. Khaleghi-Motlagh (hereafter KM).

⁴ Khaleghi-Motlagh, "The long road to a critical text of the *Shahname*", 57-58, lists these 15 mss, which he selected after examining 45 copies dating from before 1500 that he considered most reliable.

⁵ Khaleghi-Motlagh, "Ferdowsi i. Life", 516, gives 25 Esfand 400/8 March 1010 as the date when Firdausi completed the *Shahnama*.

version, the Florence manuscript dated 1217,⁶ which means one will never know how the poem originally would have read. Nevertheless, Khaleghi-Motlagh's edition remains the most suitable one to use as a base for comparison with *Shahnama* versions that contain a relatively large number of additional verses, in order to seek out passages that may be considered later interpolations.

In all, Faramarz's name appears in eight different episodes of the *Shahnama*. Whilst in three of these his name is mentioned without his part in the story being of any significance, four episodes see Faramarz playing an active role and appearing as a pugnacious warrior.⁷ The eighth episode also presents Faramarz as a warrior, but here his role is much more passive and non-combatant: this episode is entitled *dastan-i 'arz kardan-i kaykhusrau*, 'the story of Kay Khusrau's review' (KM, III, 3-24).⁸ In this story Faramarz is sent on a campaign of conquest to India. Whilst the *Shahnama* presents no follow-up of this episode, an account of Faramarz's expedition is given in the longer *Faramarznama*: this epic first presents a summary of the *Shahnama* story and then narrates its sequel. In order to place 'the story of Kay Khusrau's review' in the context of the longer *Faramarznama*, it is necessary first to discuss this *Shahnama* episode. To this purpose a comparison will be made between Khaleghi-Motlagh's and Macan's editions.

Consisting of just 365 verses in Khaleghi-Motlagh's edition, 'the story of Kay Khusrau's review' is relatively short. This episode serves as an introduction to Kay Khusrau's campaign against Turan to revenge the death of Siyavush. It opens with a passage mentioning Kay Khusrau's qualities (vs. 1-13). Next, it tells how the young king, once he has ascended the throne, cultivates his country and receives the nobles from his realm, including Zal and Rustam (vs. 14-133). Having made a tour of his entire

⁶ This ms. Cl. III. 24 of the Florence Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, referred to in KM as ms. Florence, contains only the first half of the *Shahnama* and served as the base for the first half of KM's edition. Piemontese, "Nuova luce su Firdawsī: uno 'Šāhnāma' datato 614 H./1217 a Firenze", 1-38, discusses the author's discovery of this manuscript.

⁷ The four *Shahnama* stories presenting Faramarz in an active role are, all in KM, *kin-i siyavakhsh* (II, 379-416), *rustam-u isfandiyar* (V, 291-438), *rustam-u shaghad* (V, 439-67) and *bahman* (V, 471-84). The other three stories, in which Faramarz's name is merely mentioned, are *kamus-i kashani* (III, 105-285), *bizhan-u manizha* (III, 303-97) and *razm-i yazdah rukh* (IV, 3-166). The eighth story is discussed presently.

⁸ A longer, more literal, translation of the title of this story would be 'the story of Kay Khusrau holding a review'. Although KM vocalises the word عرض with two *fathas* (to be pronounced as 'araz'), I have followed the reading ('arz) 'reviewing an army', as given in Dihkhuda, *Lughatnama*, XXXI, 164-69, at 168, and Steingass, *A comprehensive Persian-English dictionary*, 843.

kingdom, Kay Khusrau swears an oath to turn against Afrasiyab, who after all is his maternal grandfather, and he calls upon the Iranian heroes to join him in his war of vengeance. All his nobles pledge themselves to the service of their king, after which Kay Khusrau draws up a list of all this troops and distributes his treasures (vs. 134-238).

The next part is relevant for the story of the longer *Faramarznama*. One day Rustam, accompanied by Zavara and Faramarz, comes before the king and tells him about a region that once was part of Zabulistan, and thus belonged to Iran, but now is oppressed by Turan:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| چو از روز شد کوه چون سندروس | به ابراند آمد خروش خروس |
| (240) تهمن پیامد بنزدیک شاه | از ایران سخن رفت و از تاج و گاه |
| زواره فرامرز با او بهم | همی رفت هر گونه از بیش و کم |
| چنین گفت رسم به شاه زمین | که ای نامبردار با آفرین |
| (243) به زاولستان در یکی شهر بود | کز آن بوم و بر تور را بهر بود |
| منوچهر کرد آن ز ترکان تهی | یکی خوب جایست با فرهی |
| چو کاکوس شد بی دل و پیر سر | بیفتاد از و فرو نام و گهر |
| همی باز و ساوش به توران برند | سوی شاه ایران همی ننگرند |
| (247) فراوان بدان مرز پیل ست و گنج | تن بی گاهان از ایشان به رنج |
| ز بس غارت و کشتن و تاختن | سراز باد توران بر افراختن |

(KM, III, 17, vs. 239-48)

When the new day turned the mountains the colour of sandarac
the crowing of the cock reached up to the clouds

- (240) Tahamtan came before the king
he spoke about Iran and about the crown and the court
He was together with Zavara and Faramarz
bringing up all kinds of things great and small
Thus spoke Rustam to the king of the land:
"O famous ruler, praise be upon you
- (243) In Zabulistan there once was a region
in which lands Turan had a share
Manuchihr emptied it of the Turks
it is a good place full of prestige

- When Kavus became dejected and old
 he lost his glory, fame and wisdom
 They bring revenue and tribute to Turan
 and don't look anymore to the king of Iran
 (247) There are elephants and treasures in abundance in those marches
 the bodies of the innocent are in affliction because of them
 Because of all the plunder, killing and attacks
 they will raise up their heads out of the wind of Turan"

Rustam continues by saying that now Kay Khusrau is ruler of Iran, he should send an army to reconquer this region, for in this manner he will both add to his tributary lands and inflict a defeat upon the Turanians (vs. 249-52). Having applauded this idea, the king tells Rustam to select a large army of brave men and appoint his own son at the head of this expedition, since the right man for such a job surely is Faramarz:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|-------|
| تو بگرین ازین لشکر نامدار | بین تاسپه چند باید بکار | |
| بهای زمین درخور ارزتست | زمینی که پیوسته ی مرزتست | (255) |
| چنان چون باید ز جنگاوران | فرامر زاده سپاهی گران | |
| به کام نهنگان رسد شست اوی | گشاده شود کار بردست اوی | |
- (KM, III, 17-18, vs. 254-57)

- See how many soldiers you need for this action
 and you may choose them from this famous army
 (255) A country that is connected to your borders
 it suits your merit to value these lands
 Give Faramarz a mighty army
 of as many warriors as is requisite
 The affair will be resolved by his hands
 his snare will attain the throats of the crocodiles

This answer of course pleases the champion, who praises the king, after which wine is sent for and they feast far into the night (vs. 258-60).

The next morning, Kay Khusrau reviews a march-past of several Iranian army-leaders and their troops (vs. 261-327). The tail of the procession is made up by an army of hardy warriors from Kashmir, Kabul and Nimruz, led by Faramarz (vs. 328-32). The young hero pays his respects to the king, who holds a speech (vs. 335-48), which includes just one line where he gives Faramarz control of *hindustan*, India:

کنون سر بر هندوستان تراست ز قنوج تا مرزدستان تراست

(KM, III, 23, v. 337)

Now the whole of India is yours
from Qannuj to Dastan's marches it is yours

Khusrau continues by giving the young warrior some counsel, after which Faramarz praises and prostrates himself before the king and then sets off on his campaign (vs. 349-51).

For the first part of the way Faramarz is accompanied by his father, here referred to by his epithet Tahamtan, who is pained by their parting and also gives his son some advice, as well as expressing the wish that his expedition will be aided by fate:

تہمتن دو فرسنگ با او برفت	ہمی مغرش از رقتن او بکفت
یاموختش رزم و بزم و خرد	ہمی خواست کز روز را مش برد
پراز درد از آنجا بگشت	بہ سوی سراپردہ آمد زدشت

(KM, III, 23-24, vs. 352-54)

Tahamtan went with him for two parasangs
his brain splitting because of his departure
(353) He taught him fighting and feasting and wisdom
wishing that he would find some rest in life
Full of pain he returned from there
and came from the plain towards his pavilion

Then Rustam rejoins the king and the story ends with them both drinking wine and musing about the vicissitudes of life (vs. 355-65).

Although Faramarz's expedition to India is set in the context of the Iranian campaign of vengeance against Turan, an important theme in the *Shahnama*, Firdausi gives this expedition no further mention. 'The story of Kay Khusrau's review' is immediately followed by the story of Furud (KM, III, 27-102) and Faramarz is not referred to again until the story of Bizhan and Manizha (KM, III, 303-97). Also, Faramarz's role in this episode is relatively passive. It is Rustam who takes the lead by coming before Kay Khusrau and suggesting the reconquest of the lands bordering on Sistan. Although at the end of this episode Faramarz receives the rights to 'the whole of India' (v. 337) and is spoken to personally by the king, thus being treated as an independent army leader, he is not seen in

combat. Moreover, after Rustam has accompanied Faramarz for the first stages of his journey and taken leave of his son, the storyline of the *Shahnama* returns with him to the Iranian king, rather than following Faramarz to India. Considering the manner in which the *Shahnama* presents Faramarz in a secondary role in comparison to his father, as well as remaining silent on the events and outcome of Faramarz's Indian expedition, one can imagine that a poet felt compelled to do the young hero justice by complementing Firdausi's work and composing the *Faramarz-nama*.

The Place Name Qannuj

In Khaleghi-Motlagh's *Shahnama* edition, the destination of Faramarz's expedition is described rather vaguely. At first, the region bordering on Zabulistan remains unnamed. Rustam, when he pleads his case before the king, merely makes mention of '*shahr*', land or province,⁹ and of '*bum-u bar*', land or region (v. 243),¹⁰ whilst in his reply, Khusrau uses only the word '*zamin*', land or country (v. 255).¹¹ However, one could infer from Rustam's description of this place as being rich in elephants and treasures (v. 247) that he is talking about India. Only towards the end of the episode, when Faramarz is about to leave on his campaign and presents himself before the king, is mention made of this country's name and extent: 'the whole of India [...] from Qannuj to Dastan's marches' (v. 337). Khusrau's remark implies that India is the country lying between Sistan, the lands belonging to the dynasty ruled by its oldest living member Zal, or Dastan, and the Indian city Qannuj, also known as Kannauj.¹²

⁹ Wolff, *Glossar zu Firdosis Schahname*, 580, *shahr*, gives as a translation under entry B, 'Land' (country, land) and specifically for the verse in question (Mohl, story 13, v. 259), 'Provinz' (province). Khaleghi-Motlagh, *Notes on the Shahnameh*, I, 884, gives three possible interpretations for the term *shahr*: '*kishvar*' (land, country), '*balad*, *payitakht*' (city) and '*khatta*, *nahiya*, *sarzamin*' (region, territory); *Ibid.*, II, 425, gives only '*kishvar*'.

¹⁰ Wolff, *Glossar*, 130, *bar*, under entry no. 18, refers to the verse in question (Mohl, story 13, v. 259), but gives no direct translation for *bum-u bar*. Wolff only gives separate translations, at 157, *bum*, under B, 'Gegend, Land' (region, country) and at 129, *bar*, under F, 'Wüste, Land' (desert, country). Khaleghi-Motlagh, *Notes*, I, 731, (referring to II, 309, v. 387) gives as a synonym for *bum-u bar*, '*sarzamin*' (region, territory).

¹¹ Wolff, *Glossar*, 473-4, *zamin*, 'Erde, Erdboden, Land, Welt' (earth, ground or country, land, world).

¹² Kannauj, or Kanauj, is the name of a city in the modern-day province Uttar Pradesh in India, about 350 kilometres southwest of New Delhi and some 75 kilometres to the north-northeast of Kanpur. The choice here to transcribe KM's قنوج as Qannuj rather than Qannauj follows the spelling given by Wolff, *Glossar*, 622.

The references to Qannuj, as well as Kashmir, in the *Shahnama* have been the subject of discussion. The occurrences of these place names could be taken as an implicit reference to the marauding expeditions by the Ghaznavid sultan Mahmud (r. 998-1030). Whilst Mahmud first invaded Kashmir in 1015, Qannuj is known as the eastern limit of his campaign of 1018-19.¹³ However, this campaign postdates the generally accepted date of 1010 for the completion of the *Shahnama*. According to Ateş, a number of references in the *Shahnama* to events taking place after 1010, most notably Sultan Mahmud's first invasion of Kashmir and his conquest of Qannuj, give a *terminus post quem* for the poem's final redaction: he believes, therefore, that the *Shahnama* could not have been finished before 1019.¹⁴ Khaleghi-Motlagh, on the other hand, rejects the occurrence of place names like Qannuj and Kashmir in the *Shahnama* as actual proof that Firdausi made a later revision in 1018 or 1019 and argues that these names, just like those of Rum, Hind and Chin, appear at several points throughout the poem and that their occurrence "is simply due to poetic licence and leads to no historical conclusions".¹⁵

Indeed, names of large countries such as Rum, Hind and Chin, and even of a smaller province like Kashmir, can be taken as indications of regions with unspecified or fluctuating boundaries that have held a certain significance to Iran throughout history and as such mark rather general places. It seems plausible that Firdausi included their names to connote distant lands, without feeling the need to base himself on any historical facts. Qannuj, on the other hand, is a more precise location; its occurrence in the *Shahnama* needs a more specific explanation. As the most eastern reach of Mahmud's raids, the name Qannuj from 1018 onwards would undoubtedly have connoted the geographical extent of the Ghaznavid

¹³ Bosworth, *The Ghaznavids*, 102, 114, 116, and 140, only makes brief references to the 'Qanauj' campaign of 409/1018. Nazim, *The life and times of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna*, 104-5, describes Mahmud's two invasions of Kashmir of 1015-16 and 1021-22 and at 106-10, gives a full account of the 'Kanauj' campaign of 409 (1018-19): having arrived in Qannuj on 8 Sha'ban 409 (20 December 1018), Mahmud spent some time plundering and capturing forts in this region and departed for Ghazna towards the end of the same month (January 1019). Whilst Mahmud failed to annex Kashmir to his empire, Qannuj was included in its suzerainty. Kennedy, *An historical atlas of Islam*, 62b, shows 'Kanawj' as the goal of Mahmud's raid of 1018 and lying on the eastern borders of Ghaznavid control.

¹⁴ Ateş, "La date de la dernière redaction de Şāh-nāme de Firdavsi-ī Tūsī", 172-73.

¹⁵ Khaleghi-Motlagh, "Ferdowsi", 516, in reaction to Ateş' article. Whilst Ateş corresponds, as date for the final redaction, the Islamic years 409 and 410 to the Christian dates 1019 and 1020, Khaleghi-Motlagh gives 1018 and 1019. The year 409 lasted from May 1018 to May 1019 and 410 ended in April 1020.

Empire. However, for several centuries before the Ghaznavid incursions, Qannuj, as capital of the mighty dynasty of the Gurjara-Pratihara, was regarded as 'the coveted "imperial centre" of North India',¹⁶ which means it must have known a widespread fame. Consequently, there would have been no need for Mahmud to have conquered this town, for Firdausi to have been familiar with its name and significance and consequently to include Qannuj within the *Shahnama's* geographical realm. This place name not only served the poet to symbolise India as a whole, but also represented an ideal destination for Faramarz's expedition.

Macan's Shahnama Edition and the Place Name Khargah

Comparison of Khaleghi-Motlagh's version of 'the story of Kay Khusrau's review' with three other often quoted *Shahnama* editions, those of Macan, Mohl and Bertels',¹⁷ shows that by far the longest reading can be found in Macan's. Published in Calcutta in 1829, Macan's edition gives only defective information on its sources, which date from the 15th to the 17th centuries,¹⁸ and has no critical apparatus. This makes it impossible for the reader to determine the origin of any particular verse, let alone to judge which part of the text may or may not be deemed authentic. As the following discussion illustrates, Macan's edition has a much larger number of verses than Khaleghi-Motlagh's, which implies that Macan included a lot of material from later manuscripts that may be considered spurious.¹⁹

Macan's latter part of the episode of 'Kay Khusrau's review', from Rustam's arrival before the king to tell him about the borderlands he would like to reconquer up to the story's end (KM, III, 17-24, vs. 239-365), contains a large number of additional verses. Whilst in Khaleghi-Motlagh's version this section makes up 127 verses, in Macan's it consists of 48 lines more, thus a total of 175 verses (Macan, II, 559-65). In all, Macan's version of this section, compared to Khaleghi-Motlagh, misses

¹⁶ Kulke & Rothermund, *A history of India*, 106.

¹⁷ *The Shah Nameh*, ed. Macan, II, 546-65 (505 vs.), *Le livre des rois*, ed. Mohl, II, 558-90, vs. 1-386 (hereafter M) and *Shahnama*, ed. Bertels, IV, 8-31, vs. 1-379. Macan's edition (hereafter Macan) has no verse numbers.

¹⁸ Macan, I, 4-6, gives the dates for only 11 of the 21 manuscripts he consulted, ranging from 821 to 1052/1418-19 to 1642-43. The information Macan further provides for these manuscripts gives the present-day reader few clues to their origins or to where they could now be located.

¹⁹ Davis, "Interpolations to the text of the Šāhnāme", 35, holds as a rule of thumb that the later a *Shahnama* manuscript is, the longer it is likely to be, or the more interpolations it contains.

seven verses, but has an extra 55. Despite their large number, most of Macan's additional verses change little to the main storyline. For the greater part they expand upon the story without giving any crucial information. Three instances however, form an exception: they each mention the name of the borderlands Faramarz is about to conquer, Khargah.

The first instance where the name Khargah occurs in Macan's version of 'Kay Khusrau's review' is when Rustam comes before the king and holds a short speech. Macan's edition contains five additional verses that occur between two lines that correspond to KM, vs. 246-47, quoted above. Rustam tells how the region that once belonged to Iran now pays tribute to Turan and therefore, despite its affluence, suffers. According to Macan's version of Rustam's description, Khargah is a paradisiacal place, green, cultivated and full of riches. Also, a rather specified indication is given of this region's location.

دهستان بسیار پر باغ و کشت	فراوان دگر مرز همچون بهشت
درو بیکران لشکر و خواسته	جهانی است از خوبی آراسته
جهان دیده دهقان گسترده نام	مرآن مرز خگاه خواند بنام
بقنوج و کشمیر و آن بوم و بر	ز یک نیمه برسند دار دگدر
پیوست بامر ز توران زمین	دگر نیمه راهش سوی مرز چین
تن بیگانه از ایشان برنج	فراوان دران مرز پیلست و گنج

(cf. KM, 247)

(Macan, II, 559)

Also, the marches are abundant just like paradise
 with many villages full of gardens and tillage
 The land is embellished with good things
 containing soldiers and riches without bounds
 They call those marches by the name Khargah
 an experienced dihqan has spread its fame
 One half gives passage to Sind
 to Qannuj and Kashmir and those regions
 The other half contains a road to the borders of China
 and is connected to the marches of the land of Turan
 (cf. KM, 247) There are elephants and treasures in abundance in those marches
 the bodies of the innocent are in affliction because of them

Contrary to Khaleghi-Motlagh's version, this passage gives a well-outlined description of the lands lost to Turan. Instead of merely employing vague terms such as *shahr* and *zamin*, Macan's version gives these lands a name, Khargah. Moreover, Macan specifies this region's location: it stretches as far as Sind, Qannuj and Kashmir, whilst bordering on both China and Turan. Rather than being left in suspense to learn of Faramarz's destination up until the point where he is personally dispatched by the king, the reader is informed during the first reference to these lands of their whereabouts. In Macan's edition this reference not only includes names that Khaleghi-Motlagh omits, such as Sind, Kashmir and Chin, but it also contains an additional mention of Qannuj.

The second mention of Khargah occurs in Khusrau's reply, where the king tells Rustam to put Faramarz in charge of the expedition. Macan's text contains two additional verses, placed between two lines that are the same as the previously quoted KM, vs. 256-57:

فرامرز راده سپاهی گران	چنان چون بیاید ز جنگ آوران
بگو تا بدین کین به بند دگر	که هم پهلوان است و هم نامور
ز خراگاه تا بوم هندوستان	ز کشمیر تا مرز جادوستان
گشاده شود کار بردست اوی	بکام نهنگان رسد شست اوی

(Macan, II, 560)

Give Faramarz a mighty army
 of as many warriors as is requisite
 Tell him to gird his loins for this vengeance
 for he is both a champion and a famous man
 From Khargah until the land of Hindustan
 from Kashmir until the borders of Jadustan
 The affair will be resolved by his hands
 his snare will attain the throats of the crocodiles

The third of these quoted verses gives another indication of the region Faramarz is to conquer: he will get rid of any disturbances as far as the borders of *hindustan*, India, in the lands lying between Kashmir and a region called *jadustan*. From this verse it appears that the lands of Khargah border on India. It is however unclear what exactly is the status of Kashmir: this province is thought either to belong to Khargah's territories or, what is more likely, to directly adjoin Khargah. Jadustan can be interpreted as a land inhabited by people that perform magic, or 'the

country of sorcerers'.²⁰ This meaning implies that these people are followers of a religion about which little is known, but that certainly is deemed reprehensible by the standards of the *Shahnama*, thus that they are infidels. Although both these 'sorcerers', *jaduan*, and the lands they inhabit are described in the vaguest of terms, Jadustan may be considered a diminutive term used to designate Hindustan.²¹ This means that Kay Khusrau says twice in one verse that Faramarz should march as far as the Indian borders. It does not, though, become completely clear from these verses whether Faramarz is to actually cross these borders and include India in his conquest.

The third and final mention of Khargah is part of Kay Khusrau's address to Faramarz following the presentation of this hero and his army. Macan's version of Kay Khusrau's speech differs from Khaleghi-Motlagh's, both in order and in length. Most importantly, in the first part of his speech the king not only gives Faramarz control of India, but he also mentions the regions the warrior is to traverse.

بدو گفت برکش سوی هندوان همان مرز خرگاه تا جاودان
 پیرداز قنوج و کشمیر و سند بگیر ای سپهبد بهندی پرند
 [...]

(cf. KM, 337) کون مرز هندوستان مر تراست ز قنوج تا مرز دستان تراست

(Macan, II, 563)

He said to him: 'Advance towards the Indians
 and those borderlands of Khargah to all eternity
 Conquer Qannuj and Kashmir and Sind
 take, you army-leader, your sword to India
 [...]

(cf. KM, 337) Now the marches of India are yours
 from Qannuj to Dastan's marches it is yours'

By repeating the locations Rustam cited earlier on (Macan, 560), Kay Khusrau this time clearly specifies the regions Faramarz should conquer: he should take Qannuj, Kashmir and Sind, once he has crossed Khargah. Further, as in the previously quoted passage, the king again says Faramarz

²⁰ Dihkhuda, *Lughatnama*, XIV, 34-35; Steingass, *Dictionary*, 349; Wolff, *Glossar*, 250.

²¹ Dihkhuda, *Lughatnama*, XIV, 34-35, *jadustan*, includes an entry saying that this term is also used as an allegorical reference to Hindustan, which is supported by three examples from Firdausi's work.

should go as far as the country of the Indians. It still remains unclear whether Khusrau's remark that Faramarz should 'advance towards the Indians' should be interpreted as an actual order to invade India. Even though in both Khaleghi-Motlagh's and Macan's versions the king gives Faramarz control of the region lying between Qannuj and Sistan, the former version calls it 'the whole of India', *sarbisar-i hindustan* (KM, v. 337), whilst in Macan the region is thought of as India's borderlands, *marz-i hindustan*. Nevertheless, if Qannuj according to Firdausi not only is situated in India, but also symbolises this country as a whole, one can only infer that Kay Khusrau means for Faramarz to go beyond its marches and conquer India in its entirety.

It is interesting that Macan includes names that are absent from Khaleghi-Motlagh's version. Whilst Jadustan can best be interpreted as a diminutive synonym for India, Khargah cannot be identified as an existing geographical place.²² In Macan's edition, Khargah is described as a region that possibly includes, but more likely merely lies next to, Kashmir, whilst it apparently also borders on Sind and Qannuj. Further, it should join borders with China and Turan, as well as with India. This geographical description makes all the more sense if Qannuj is supposed to represent India as a whole. Finally, Khargah is said to stretch as far as the marches of Dastan's country, Sistan. As a noun, both *khargah* (خرگه) and *khargāh* (خرگاه) can be interpreted as a 'pavilion' or 'large tent' or as a 'spacious place' or 'pleasant place'.²³ Wolff agrees with these first two interpretations of *khargah* or *khargāh* as a general noun, but as a place name he gives *khargāh* no further description than 'geographical name, province'.²⁴ Khaleghi-Motlagh interprets *khargāh* as either '*saraparda*', pavilion, or '*sarzamin-i turkan*', country of the Turks.²⁵ It is obvious from both Wolff's and Khaleghi-Motlagh's second description that as a place

²² This at least applies to the world of the *Shahnama*. In Egypt, Kharga, or al-Khari-dja, is the name of one of the oases in the western desert; see Sayyid, "al-Wahat", 32-33.

²³ Dihkhuda, *Lughatnama*, XVII, 458-59 and 462-63; Steingass, *Dictionary*, 456. In order to make the following discussion as clear as possible, it is necessary at this point to distinguish between the different orthographies of *khargah* and *khargāh*.

²⁴ Wolff, *Glossar*, 318, '*Xargāh* GN, Provinz'; both *xargāh* and *xargah* are described as 'Großzelt, Königszelt' (large tent, pavilion).

²⁵ Khaleghi-Motlagh, I, 838, also contains the entry *khargah*, which merely refers to the entry *khargāh*. More detailed descriptions of *khargāh* are given, as part of the discussions of the relevant verses in KM, I and II, in *Notes*, 364-5 (referring to I, 328, v. 20), 384 (I, 353, v. 112), 490 (II, 115, v. 151) and 567 (II, 205, v. 56).

name Khargah, which appears in a handful of other verses in the *Shahnama*,²⁶ indicates a region that is undefined.

Both Wolff and Khaleghi-Motlagh refer to Horn, who says that *khargāh* (خرگاه) is a writing error for *kharghān* (خرغان), a place name in the region of Bukhara.²⁷ Shahidi Mazandarani's explanation tells us that this place name could also be read as Kharghankath.²⁸ This means that Khargah, as it appears in the original *Shahnama* tradition, was supposed to lie not far on the Turanian side of the river Jaihun, in Transoxiana. These interpretations imply that the name Khargah had with time replaced the original name Kharghan or Kharghankath and, rather than representing a specific place, had come to serve as a *pars pro toto* for the region surrounding Bukhara, in order to denote the country of the Turks. However, Kharghankath, at least in early Islamic times, was just one of the many small towns in the district of Bukhara,²⁹ which makes it unlikely that precisely this town would be taken to represent a larger region. Moreover, even though Khargah in the *Shahnama* is supposed to be part of the Turanian domains, a quick look at a map shows that a region surrounding Bukhara hardly reaches as far as the borders of Sistan or encompasses Kashmir and Qannuj. Even if Kharghankath or Kharghan used to indicate a larger region in Transoxiana in pre-Islamic times, by the time Firdausi composed the *Shahnama*, the original designation of Khargah had apparently been forgotten and the name had merely stuck in the collective memory as 'land of the Turks'. Moreover, the fact that the word *khargah* can also

²⁶ Wolff, *Glossar*, 318, cites a total of eight appearances of *Xargāh* in the *Shahnama*, including three in story 13, but also cites 35 occurrences of *xargāh*, either separately or in combination with another word, and 7 occurrences of *xargah*. As the description of *Notes*, 567, referring to KM, II, 205, v. 56 (see previous note), illustrates, *khargāh* in the meaning of 'large tent' can also be taken as indication of 'residence of Turks', thus as a place name.

²⁷ Horn, "Šāhnāme 64, 48", 176. References to this article by Wolff, *Glossar*, 318, *Xargāh* and Khaleghi-Motlagh, *Notes*, I, 365, in the entry discussing the word *khargah* as it occurs in KM, I, 328, v. 20.

²⁸ Shahidi Mazandarani, *Farhang-i Shahnama*, 290, explains *khargāh* as '*kharghankath*' (خرغانکث) or '*kharghānkath*' (خرغانکث), which he describes as a dependency of Bukhara (*tauba'-yi bukhara*) or a town belonging to Bukhara (*yeki az shahrha-yi bukhara*); the suffix *-kath* can also be substituted for *-kat*, *-kad*, *-kand*, *-ghan*, *-ghān*, etc., which forms all have the meaning of 'location'. Dikhuda, *Lughatnama*, XVII, 445, describes *kharghānkath* as the name of a village of Bukhara situated opposite Khudimankan or as the name of a village opposite Karminiya, one farsang beyond the river-bed of the river Soghd. Ibn Hauqal, *Configuration de la terre (Kitab surat al-ard)*, 444, 446, 468-9 and 471, describes the location of Kharghankath and lists it alongside a series of other places, including Khudimankan and Karminiya.

²⁹ Le Strange, *The lands of the eastern caliphate*, 468, calls Kharghankath a hamlet. See also previous note.

indicate 'a pleasant place', hints of this region's verdancy and richness and hence of its desirability. In short, Khargah can be interpreted as an enemy territory that is worthwhile to be conquered. As such and with the link to its presumably original location long since lost, Khargah in the context of Faramarz's Indian expedition in Macan's edition could now be located somewhere between Sistan and India, whilst it still represented an area belonging to Turan.

The inconsistency between the use of a certain place name in the *Shahnama* and its supposed original meaning supports the assumption that the references to Khargah in Macan's 'story of Kay Khusrau's review' derive from a later addition. These additional verses most likely originate from one or more of the later *Shahnama* manuscripts that Macan used for his collation. The reason why one or more scribes at a certain point in the copying process chose to insert a large number of verses in this story, including those referring to Khargah and Jadustan, can only be based on speculation. It is also unclear whether such a scribe composed these verses himself or derived them from another source. It seems quite likely that this hypothetical scribe thought that the episode in question lacked in specific facts and that he inserted these verses in order to present the *Shahnama* audience with more information on Faramarz's Indian campaign. As is shown below, the longer *Faramarznama* deals with its protagonist's exploits in places like Jadustan and Khargah. Considering the subject matter of the additional verses in Macan's edition and especially the geographical references they contain, as well as the supposed relatively late date of their composition, it seems very possible that they were based on the longer *Faramarznama*.

Finally, towards the end of Macan's version of 'the story of Kay Khusrau's review' a large passage is interpolated, consisting of a speech by Rustam, who extensively counsels Faramarz, and his son's reply (Macan, 563-64). This interpolation is first followed by a verse corresponding to KM, v. 353 and then by another two additional verses, as well as one verse that slightly differs from KM, v. 354. Thus, in Macan Faramarz's departure reads as follows:

بیاموختش رزم و بزم و خرد همی خواست کز روز رامش برد
 ازان پس پیدرود بایکدگر بسی بوسه دادند بر چشم و سر
 یکایک پذیرفت گفتار او ی ازان پس سوی راه آورد روی

فرامرز رفت و پدر بازگشت بسوی سرپرده آمد ز دشت (cf. KM, 354)

(Macan, II, 564)

He taught him fighting, feasting and wisdom
 wishing that he would find some rest in life
 After that in farewell they gave each other
 many kisses upon their eyes and heads
 Each one of his sayings he accepted
 and then he turned to face the road
 (cf. KM, 354) Faramarz departed and his father returned
 and came from the plain towards his pavilion

This reading not only differs from Khaleghi-Motlagh's, but it also presents another link with the longer *Faramarznama*. As the following discussion shows, the introductory part of this epic, which serves as a preamble to its main story, exists in two different versions: both versions contain one of Macan's two additional verses.

THE FIRST SECTION OF THE LONGER *FARAMARZNAME*

Faramarz, who in the *Shahnama* plays a secondary role compared with his father, features more prominently as an independent hero in the two *Faramarznamas*. Like the shorter variant of this epic, the longer *Faramarznama* tells of Faramarz's expeditions to India, where he deals with many human, demon and animal foes and appears as a full-blown warrior in his own right. Set during the reign of Kay Khusrau, the poem recounts Faramarz's military campaigns on India's mainland, followed by his voyages to several marvellous islands and regions. It links directly back to the *Shahnama* and can be seen as a continuation of 'the story of Kay Khusrau's review': whilst Firdausi's poem remains silent on the events following Faramarz's departure to India, the longer *Faramarznama* consists of an extensive account of this hero's expedition. Its introductory section presents an abbreviated version of the said *Shahnama* story and provides a setting for the longer *Faramarznama*'s first section proper. Dealing with Faramarz's campaign on the Indian mainland, this first section is especially closely connected to Macan's *Shahnama*, since both texts describe the campaign in the same geographical terms, such as Hindustan, Qannuj, Kashmir, Jadustan and Khargah.

Little is known about the two *Faramarznamas'* origins. The research that has been published on these epics, mainly by Khaleghi-Motlagh, is rather limited.³⁰ As is the case for its shorter version, the author and date of composition of the longer *Faramarznama* are unknown. It is unclear whether both variants were composed by the same poet or even if they derive from the same origins. Based on the poem's style and its use of language, it is estimated that the shorter *Faramarznama* was written towards the end of the 11th or the beginning of the 12th century.³¹ Khaleghi-Motlagh suggests no date for the longer *Faramarznama*, but merely says the shorter one appears to be older.³² The style and language of the longer poem appear to differ little from the shorter one, which would place the composition of the longer *Faramarznama* not long after 1100. Whilst the shorter *Faramarznama* shares one of its sources, Azadsarv, with both the *Shahnama* story of Rustam and Shaghad and another poem from the Persian epic cycle, the *Shabrangnama*,³³ it is uncertain what were the longer *Faramarznama*'s origins. The anonymous *Tarikh-i Sistan*, which for the greater part dates from around the mid-11th century, mentions 12 volumes of stories dealing with Faramarz.³⁴ Although the *Tarikh*

³⁰ Khaleghi-Motlagh, "Faramarznama", *Irannama*, 22-45 and "Mutali'at-i hamasi ii. Faramarznama", 85-121. See also Khaleghi-Motlagh, "Faramarz" and "Faramarz-nama", 238-39 and 240-41. The first two articles, which show a large degree of overlap, focus on the shorter *Faramarznama*, whilst giving for the longer version barely more than an outline of its story. As he points out in "Mutali'at-i hamasi", 107, Khaleghi-Motlagh didn't become acquainted with the longer version until a later stage of his research. Safa, *Hamasa-sara'i*, 294-96, discusses only the shorter *Faramarznama*, apparently having no knowledge of the longer version.

³¹ Khaleghi-Motlagh, "Faramarznama", *Irannama*, 31 and "Mutali'at-i hamasi", 99, places the date of composition of the shorter *Faramarznama* no later than the second half of the 5th century AH, which corresponds to 1058-1106. Khaleghi-Motlagh, "Faramarz-nama", 240, says 'probably written between mid-5th/11th and early 6th/12th centuries'. Safa, *Hamasa-sara'i*, 295, says 520 AH at the latest, thus 1126 AD.

³² Khaleghi-Motlagh, "Faramarz-nama", 240.

³³ Khaleghi-Motlagh, "Faramarznama", *Irannama*, 31-32 and "Mutali'at-i hamasi", 101-2. The *Shabrangnama* deals with the demon Shabrang, son of the White Div who is known from the *Shahnama* story of Kay Kavus' war in Mazandaran. See, Safa, *Hamasa-sara'i*, 323, and Gabrielle van den Berg's chapter in this volume. Azadsarv was a scholar of around the late 9th century from the region of Marv, who is thought to have recorded at least these three, and probably more, stories surrounding Rustam's family. See Khaleghi-Motlagh, "Azadsarv", 178.

³⁴ *Tarikh-i Sistan*, ed. Bahar, 7, says nothing more than 'the accounts of Faramarz consist of 12 separate volumes' (*akhbar-i faramarz jida-gana davazdah mujallad ast*). Meisami, *Persian historiography*, 131-32, discusses the dating of the different sections of the *Tarikh-i Sistan*. Although this work is undated, the narrative shows a clear break in the 1050s, which implies that the first, and by far largest, section of the book was written

gives no further description of these stories, it probably refers to a pre-Islamic source in Pahlavi. This must have served as an important source for a number of poems from the Persian epic cycle in which Faramarz plays a role, most notably either or both of the versified *Faramarznamas*.³⁵ Possibly these stories also provided material, either directly or indirectly,³⁶ for several sections of the *Shahnama* that deal with the warriors of Sistan.

As far as is known, the longer *Faramarznama* exists in three versions: two are manuscripts that are now kept in the London British Library and the third is part of a lithographed book. One of the manuscripts, ms. RSPA 176, presents the epic as an entirely separate poem; it is complete, consists of some 5,440 verses covering 194 folios and is dated 1166/1752.³⁷ The other manuscript version consists of an appendix (fols. 368v-456r) to a truncated *Shahnama*, ms. I.O. Islamic 3263, where it follows the book of king Bahman. This version is defective: whilst it is partly mixed up with the *Shabrangnama* and also includes the shorter *Faramarznama*, it lacks an ending and has no colophon.³⁸ Despite this defect, the longer *Faramarznama* in ms. I.O. Islamic 3263 to a large extent agrees with ms. RSPA 176 on the poem's first half.³⁹

The introduction in both manuscripts consists of almost 200 verses that paraphrase the *Shahnama* 'story of Kay Khusrau's review'.⁴⁰ Most of the introduction narrates this story in completely different wordings, although a handful of lines vaguely resemble certain *Shahnama* verses. A

around this date, thus before the supposed appearance of either of the versified *Faramarznamas*.

³⁵ Khaleghi-Motlagh, "Faramarz-nama", 240-41, "it is possible that the original source [of the longer *Faramarznama*] was a book which [...] was translated from Pahlavi into Persian [...]. This book contained between 1500 and 2000 folios [...] and thus might correspond to the twelve-volume account of Farāmarz mentioned in the *Tārīk-e Sīstān*."

³⁶ Khaleghi-Motlagh, "Ferdowsi", 518, discusses whether Firdausi could or could not read Pahlavi.

³⁷ Ross & Browne, *Catalogue of two collections of Persian and Arabic manuscripts preserved in the India Office Library*, 107-8, describes this manuscript as No. CLXXVI and gives it the title *Farāmūrz-nāma-i-Kalān*, 'The large *Faramarznama*'. The colophon of this manuscript mentions no place of origin.

³⁸ Ethé, *Catalogue of Persian manuscripts in the library of the India Office*, 551, refers to this manuscript simply as No. 3263. There is no date or place of copying.

³⁹ The pages of I.O. Islamic 3263 are in more or less regular order up until f. 396, where the *Shabrangnama* begins. This first part of the longer *Faramarznama* covers some 2,600 verses, thus about half of the poem.

⁴⁰ The introduction of I.O. Islamic 3263 (ff. 368v-370v) consists of 197 verses. Four of these are missing in RSPA 176 (ff. 1v-9v), at three different places spread throughout the introduction. On the other hand, the introduction of RSPA 176 contains an additional two verses at its very end, which are quoted below, and thus consists of a total of 195.

small section, when Khusrau asks the Iranian nobles to support him in his vengeance for Siyavush's death and gathers the heroes in order to reward them, even shows a large resemblance to a particular *Shahnama* passage.⁴¹ Further, this introduction contains not only the toponyms occurring in Khaleghi-Motlagh's version, Qannuj and Hindustan, but also those appearing in Macan's, Kashmir, Jadustan and Khargah. The introductory verses end with Rustam counselling Faramarz the evening before his departure and the next morning accompanying his son for two stages. Whilst the first verse of the following quotation is reminiscent of KM, v. 352, the next verse is all but identical to one quoted above from Macan (Macan, 564). These verses are followed by one transitional line, after which the longer *Faramarznama* proper begins with Faramarz heading towards Khargah. The following passage is quoted from ms. RSPA 176, fol. 9r-v.⁴²

چنان پهلوان رستم نامور دو منزل برون رفت خود با پسر
 وز انیس پدر و دایک دگر بسی بوسه دادند بر روی و سر
 زره باز پس گشت رستم چوشیر وز ان سو فرامرز گرد دلیر
 سوی مرزخگاه لشکر کشید ز کینه سرتیغ بر خور کشید
 (begin *Faramarznama*)
 همی راند لشکر بگردار باد چو تنگ اندر آمد بانمزشاد

That champion, the famous Rustam
 personally went for two stages along with his son
 After that in farewell they gave each other
 many kisses upon their faces and heads
 Rustam returned from the way like a lion
 and for his part Faramarz the brave warrior
 (*Faramarznama*) Led his army towards the marches of Khargah
 in vengeance he drew the point of his sword of glory

⁴¹ This section consists of 41 verses in I.O. Islamic 3263, f. 369r and 39 verses in RSPA 176, ff. 3v-5r (which manuscript misses two of I.O. Islamic's verses on f. 4v) and whilst it largely corresponds to KM, III, 9-13, vs. 112-67 or Macan, II, 552-55, it displays a number of differences from both editions.

⁴² The first of these verses, which in I.O. Islamic ends in '*raft ba an pisar*', occurs on f. 9r; the other ones are on f. 9v. The second and third verses in this quotation are missing in I.O. Islamic (see note 40). From the beginning of the main text of the longer *Faramarznama*, '*su-yi marz-i khargah...*', the two manuscripts largely agree. Since the manuscript makes no differences between a *kaf* and a *gaf*, the *gafs* in this quotation (in the words *digar*, *gasht*, *gurd*, *khargah* and *tang*) are the result of my own amendments.

He was driving on his army like the wind
when he happily neared those marches

It is remarkable that a poem from the epic cycle includes such a long section, by way of a paraphrase, of the *Shahnama*. Probably the longer *Faramarznama* had originally included, but over time lost, its opening verses. At a certain stage, at the latest by the mid-18th century, a scribe must then have felt the necessity to complete this epic and resorted to including a summarised version of the *Shahnama* story that presented the preamble to Faramarz's expedition to India. Considering the geographical references in these introductory verses, which agree with those in Macan's *Shahnama*, the scribe in question must have consulted manuscripts of a relatively late date.

The third version of the longer *Faramarznama* is a lithograph. It is the last in a book of four epic poems dealing with Faramarz from his birth to his death. The book was published in Bombay and is dated 1324/1907.⁴³ The longer *Faramarznama* (pp. 159-461) directly follows its shorter namesake, without any introductory rubric: the beginning of the reign of Kay Khusrau and thus of a new epic is marked by three transitional verses. The main text of the lithographed longer *Faramarznama* is more or less the same as in the complete manuscript RSPA 176 and consists of around 5,200 verses. However, the lithograph differs both at the end, where it includes some 850 verses from another later epic, the *Bahmannama*,⁴⁴ and in its introduction.

The lithographed introduction consists of 162 verses, all but the first three of which completely correspond with a passage from Macan's version of 'the story of Kay Khusrau's review'. The first three verses of the introduction, which serve as a transition between the shorter and longer *Faramarznamas*, tell how Khusrau mounted the throne, cultivated his country and one day was sitting with his nobles. The next 159 verses (Macan, II, 559-64) make up all but the last 16 lines of the passage discussed above, in the context of the occurrence of the toponym Khargah.

⁴³ *Faramarznama*, ed. Rustam pur-i Bahram Surush-i Tafti. A copy of this lithographed book, also originally part of the India Office collection, is kept in the British Library under reference number Per. D 11. See Arberry, *Catalogue of the library of the India Office*, vol. II, part VI: *Persian books*, 135. It has recently been printed by Mitra Mehrabadi (Tehran, 1386/2007) [ed.].

⁴⁴ Iranshah, *Bahmannama*, ed. 'Afifi, 295-344. The *Bahmannama* deals with the reign of king Bahman and includes an extended version of the *Shahnama* episode in which this king invades Sistan and fights and executes Faramarz in revenge for Rustam killing his own father Isfandiyar. See also, Safa, *Hamasa-sara'i*, 289-94.

Compared with Khaleghi-Motlagh (KM, III, 17-23, vs. 240-353), this particular section in Macan is 45 verses longer: whilst missing 6, it counts 51 additional lines. The passage opens with the verse telling how Rustam comes before Khusrau to inform him of Khargah (KM, v. 240). It ends with Faramarz being accompanied by his father, who gives him counsel (KM, v. 353) and then takes his leave (Macan, 564). This passage is directly followed, without any rubric announcing the next part, by the same transitional verse as in the two manuscript versions that marks the actual beginning of the longer *Faramarznama*.⁴⁵

یکایک پذیرفت گفتار او ی از آن پس سوی راه آورد روی
 ز ره باز پس گشت رستم چه شیر از آن سو فرامرز گرد دلیر (cf. RSPA 176, fol. 9v)

Each one of his sayings he accepted
 and then he turned to face the road
 (cf. RSPA 176) Rustam returned from the way like a lion
 and for his part Faramarz the brave warrior...

Following this transitional verse, the lithographed text presents the longer *Faramarznama* proper and largely agrees with the two manuscripts. The fact that the lithographed introduction differs completely from the manuscript versions can only mean that its early 20th-century Indian editor had no access to a manuscript of the *Faramarznama* that contained the introductory verses and was therefore compelled to base his introduction on another source, most likely an Indian lithographed *Shahnama*. Several editions, including the very first one of 1846, were produced in the same place where the lithographed *Faramarznama* appeared, Bombay. The texts of these editions were all more or less identical and were based on Macan.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ These two verses are quoted from the lithographed *Faramarznama*, 166. This book contains a number of mistakes in the pagination; a number of page numbers for instance have been assigned twice. Page 169 is followed by a second page numbered 150, which means that the longer *Faramarznama*, which begins at the first p. 159, contains two sets of pages 159-69. The quoted verses occur on the first page that is supposed to be 166, but is mistakenly numbered 164. As in the previous quotation from the manuscript, the *gaḥs* (in *guftar*, *gasht* and *gurd*) are the result of my amendments.

⁴⁶ Lithographed *Shahnama* editions appeared in India and Iran from 1846 until about the first quarter of the 20th century; their dependence on Macan is also noted by Afshar, "Shahnama, az khatti ta chapi", 33.

The First Section Proper: Faramarz's Expedition on the Indian Mainland

Although the main text of the longer *Faramarznama* is punctuated by a total of 92 rubrics in the lithograph and by 120 headings in the complete manuscript RSPA 176, it reads as a continuous story. Still, the story can be divided into several separate episodes. One such episode deals with Faramarz's military operations on the Indian mainland and makes up the poem's first section. This section latches on to the *Shahnama* 'story of Kay Khusrāu's review' in two ways. The first is by means of its preceding introductions, discussed above. The second is the manner whereby the *Shahnama* story and the first section proper of the longer *Faramarznama* are connected. The destinations of Faramarz's campaign given in the latter epic are the same as those announced in the 'story of Kay Khusrāu's review' as presented by Macan. Starting at the point where Faramarz takes leave of this father, the main text of the longer *Faramarznama* first tells of the hero's conquest of the province of Khargah; it then narrates his submission of the Indian raja, who has his capital in Qannuj. Finally, it deals with Faramarz's defeat of the governor of Kashmir. Excluding the introductory verses, the first section of the longer *Faramarznama* makes up about a third of the entire poem and, running over 32 rubrics in the lithograph, 51 in RSPA 176 and 34 in I.O. Islamic 3263, it consists of approximately 1,800 verses.

The first part of Faramarz's campaign consists of about 460 verses. Having taken leave of Rustam, Faramarz quickly leads his army along the road to Khargah and writes to the ruler of this country, a kinsman of Afrasiyab, called Turak. Faramarz demands the latter's acknowledgement of Kay Khusrāu's overlordship, but Turak, who resides in a fortress built in a river, defies him. During a nightly attack upon Faramarz's camp, Turak is ambushed and defeated, after which he calls in Afrasiyab's assistance. However, the Iranians first defeat the Turanian army and then by means of a ruse manage to capture the fortress and kill Turak. Faramarz sends an account of his successful campaign in Khargah to Kay Khusrāu, along with treasures he has retrieved from the fortress, to which the Iranian king replies with many praises, as well as an order for Faramarz to move on towards India, Hindustan, to rid that country of the sorcerers, *jaduan*. Before leaving for India, Faramarz appoints a lieutenant to govern the marches of Khargah.

The next part, consisting of around 850 verses, deals with Faramarz's expedition against the raja of India. Again, the story opens with Faramarz writing in the name of the Iranian king to the ruler, whose residence is at

Qannuj, demanding his submission, thus provoking the raja's anger. Faramarz first battles with one of the raja's warriors and then faces the Indian king himself. The latter devises a plot to capture Faramarz, but the warrior manages to fight his way out of the ambush set for him and eventually seizes the king. Faramarz leads him back to Iran, where Kay Khusrau pardons the raja and grants him the viceroyalty of India, after which Faramarz and the raja return to India. Here they are informed of a new enemy disturbing the peace, for during the raja's absence, his rule has been usurped by his governor of Kashmir, called Maharak.

This marks the transition to the third part of Faramarz's Indian campaign, which, containing just over 500 verses, follows a by now familiar pattern. After sending a letter to Maharak, reproving him for his conduct and demanding his submission, Faramarz leads his army across a deep and wide river to confront the enemy. Again, the Sistanian warrior and his men are ambushed but succeed in achieving victory, causing Maharak to flee back to Kashmir. Faramarz sends one of his army-leaders to deal with Maharak, whilst he himself travels with the raja to Qannuj to install the king on the throne. When he is notified that the Iranian army is in trouble, Faramarz rejoins his deputy and Maharak is finally defeated and killed. After appointing one of the nobles of Kashmir as this region's new governor, Faramarz returns to Qannuj, where he is cordially received by the raja and in whose name he sends tribute to Kay Khusrau. In return, the Iranian king grants Faramarz the rule of all the marches of Khargah, Kashmir and Hindustan. Next, Faramarz decides to proceed on his journey of conquest and embarks on a ship to the Indian islands: this point marks the beginning of a different part of the longer *Faramarznama* and no longer can be linked to the campaign initiated in the *Shahnama*.

Thus in the first of these campaigns, Khargah, which is described as a border province without any further geographical references, is Faramarz's sole object of conquest; in the second, it is Qannuj. Further, the raja is said to be king of Kashmir and Hindustan, from Sind to the borders of China. In the third part it becomes clear that Kashmir is a region subordinate to India, ruled by a governor. Finally, all three parts of the first section contain verses in which the name Hindustan is closely linked and practically synonymous with that of the country of sorcerers, or Jadustan. Whilst Khaleghi-Motlagh, to indicate Faramarz's goal of conquest, merely refers to the lands stretching between Sistan and Qannuj (KM, v. 337), Macan mentions the province Khargah by name and describes it as stretching as far as Qannuj, Kashmir and Sind and as bordering on China

and Turan (Macan, 559). Further, Kay Khusrau tells Faramarz not only to take the borderlands of Khargah, but also to conquer Qannuj and Kashmir and to march against the Indians (Macan, 563). The king's orders as given in Macan's *Shahnama* are thus fulfilled in the longer *Faramarznama*.

As Khaleghi-Motlagh's edition shows, many of the older *Shahnama* manuscripts dating from before 1500 make, at least in 'the story of Kay Khusrau's review', no mention of places like Khargah or Jadustan. It therefore is unlikely that the presumed 12th-century composer of the longer *Faramarznama* derived these names from Firdausi's *Shahnama*. It seems more probable that the case is reversed: one or more later *Shahnama* manuscripts include verses that were composed in reaction to the *Faramarznama*. In other words, even if the *Shahnama* and the *Faramarznama* shared one or more common sources pertaining to the warriors of Sistan, such as the 12-volume work dealing with Faramarz mentioned in the *Tarikh-i Sistan*, the two epics originally would have shown little overlap in content. At a certain point in the copying process of the *Shahnama*, a scribe who was familiar with the story of the longer *Faramarznama* must have felt the need to include more information in Firdausi's epic dealing with Faramarz's Indian campaign. To this purpose he included verses in his *Shahnama* manuscript which referred directly back to the longer *Faramarznama* and in this manner gave the two epics a closer connection. Several centuries later, this manuscript version will have been used for Macan's collation.

THE INTERPOLATED LONGER *FARAMARZNAMA*

An even more obvious connection between Firdausi's epic and the longer *Faramarznama* can be found in four *Shahnama* manuscripts. Each of these manuscripts contains, besides one or more other stories from the Persian Epic Cycle, the longer *Faramarznama* as an interpolation. The epic is represented in these *Shahnamas* by an abbreviated redaction of its first section. Two of the manuscripts are kept in the National Library of Russia in St Petersburg. One is ms. PNS 65, of unknown origin and dated 1039/1630; the other is ms. Dorn 333, copied in Mashhad in 1061/1651.⁴⁷ The third manuscript was produced, also in an unknown place, in

⁴⁷ Giuzalian & Diakonov, *Rukopisi Shakh-name v Leningradskikh sobraniakh*, 65-71 and 72-87, deal with mss. PNS 65 and Dorn 333, respectively. I am grateful to Olga Yastrebova of the National Library, as well as Firuza Abdullaeva and Charles Melville, for their kind efforts to facilitate my obtaining copies of both interpolated *Faramarznamas*.

1042/1632; it can now be found as ms. or. fol. 4252 in the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin.⁴⁸ The fourth is the oldest and was copied, probably in Shiraz, in 1025/1616; this manuscript is Spencer Pers. ms. 3 of the Public Library in New York.⁴⁹ The interpolations in the St. Petersburg ms. Dorn 333 and the Berlin manuscript are all but identical. The St. Petersburg PNS 65 and the New York versions each miss a passage of text, but for the rest the texts of these and the other two manuscripts display very large resemblances. Whilst an in-depth comparison of these interpolations lies beyond the scope of this chapter, it is worthwhile making a brief note of their contents.

In all four *Shahnama* manuscripts the interpolated longer *Faramarz-nama* occurs at the same point, towards the very end of the story of Kay Khusrau's review, shortly after Faramarz has departed for India. The interpolation follows KM, III, 24, v. 356, which tells of Rustam's return to the king, plus an additional verse saying that Faramarz mounted his steed. This very last verse before the interpolation cannot be found in either Khaleghi-Motlagh's or Macan's editions and probably was inserted to mark the transition. The first verse of the abbreviated version of the longer *Faramarznama* agrees with the previously quoted opening line of this epic's separate version and begins with '*su-yi marz-i khargah...*'. PNS 65's interpolation differs from the other three versions at the very beginning. It follows the first line of the *Faramarznama* with ten additional verses: eight of these represent KM, vs. 355-62, of which the latter six are more or less verbally repeated directly after the interpolation. In all four manuscripts the interpolation is followed by KM, v. 357, from which point onwards the story continues as known from the *Shahnama*.

The two complete interpolations in Dorn 333 (fols. 319v-330r)⁵⁰ and the Berlin manuscript (fols. 194r-203v) consist of 830 verses. Apart from minor variant readings, the two interpolations on two occasions contain more than two verses of which the order, from one version to the other,

The St. Petersburg manuscripts, as well as the other two, are also included in the database of the Cambridge Shahnama Project, <http://shahnama.caret.cam.ac.uk>.

⁴⁸ Stchoukine *et al.*, *Illuminierte Islamische Handschriften*, 109-10.

⁴⁹ Schmitz, *Islamic manuscripts in the New York Public Library*, 99-105. Images of the illustrations of the *Shahnama* in question can be viewed via <http://digitalgallery.nyp.org/nypldigital/index.cfm>, under keywords 'Firdawsī' or 'Shāhnāmāh'. The images include the interpolated *Faramarznama* (ID nos. 1658154-1658165).

⁵⁰ The numbering of the folios of Dorn 333 as given by the National Library falls one behind that in Giuzalian & Diakonov, *Rukopisi Shakh-name*, 77, which in turn agrees with the numbering on the Shahnama Project website. According to the catalogue, the interpolation in Dorn 333 would cover ff. 320v-331r.

has been reversed. The text is close to a thousand verses shorter than in the separate epic, but still tells the same general story and represents all three parts of the longer *Faramarznama*'s first section described above. Whilst omitting long passages of the story, the interpolated version also includes a large number of verses from the separate version, though often in slightly divergent readings. The interpolated redaction further contains a considerable amount of additional verses.

The longer *Faramarznama* of the New York manuscript (fols. 164r-172v) consists of 746 verses. Compared with Dorn 333 and the Berlin manuscript, the entire interpolation contains just one additional verse, but it also misses 85 verses, of which 83 are consecutive. These 83 verses are absent from the first part of the story and should have occurred between the last verse of fol. 164v and the first verse of fol. 165r. The catchword at the bottom of fol. 164v agrees with the first word of fol. 165r, which means that the interpolation was copied in its present, defective form from another manuscript and that the missing verses are the result of a mistake in the process of copying of either this or an earlier manuscript.

The interpolation in PNS 65 (fols. 165v-170r) is much shorter and counts 382 verses: between fol. 168v and fol. 169r it misses 439 consecutive verses, which make up the *Faramarznama*'s second part and the beginning of the third part. The way the first part of the story is connected to the third part suggests that this manuscript is missing a number of folios. The two catchwords at the bottom of fol. 168v do not match the first words of fol. 169r, but they do correspond with the beginning of the next verse in the text of the three other versions. A quick calculation shows that the missing 439 verses would have made up five folios, including one or two images.⁵¹ For the rest of the text, the interpolated *Faramarznama* of PNS 65 agrees with the other three versions in all but a handful of verses. Whilst for the main part following Dorn 333, PNS 65 lacks, apart from the five missing folios, just nine other verses. With the discrepancies between the extant part of its text and the corresponding sections in the other versions being so small, it appears that the missing section in PNS 65 also

⁵¹ Each page in ms. PNS 65 is made up of a maximum of 50 verses; including one or two rubrics, one page makes up 48 or 46 verses. Thus, the missing 439 verses should take up about nine pages, including several rubrics. Since the missing folios must contain an even number of pages, it follows that the missing piece of text must have included either one miniature taking up almost a full page or two smaller illustrations. The interpolated *Faramarznama* in PNS 65 contains one other illustration (f. 167v), which takes up half a page.

would have largely, if not completely, agreed originally with one of the other three interpolations.

Despite the missing folios in PNS 65 and the lacking passage in the New York manuscript, the four versions of the interpolated longer *Faramarznama* show a very close resemblance. Each of the versions contains not more than a very small number of verses that cannot be found in any of the other manuscripts, which can only mean that all four interpolations derive from the same origins. Since the New York *Shahnama* was completed in 1616, the interpolated *Faramarznama* can be dated at the latest to the early 17th century.

It is interesting to note that the longer *Faramarznama* exists in an alternative version. This truncated redaction not only presents this later epic as an interpolation, but it also differs from the separate poem in a large number of verses. Whilst the resemblances between the interpolated and the separate versions imply that the former must have been based on the latter, the interpolation nevertheless constitutes a retelling of the story of the *Faramarznama* and as such may be considered a new poem. The incorporation of the *Faramarznama* in the St Petersburg, Berlin and New York manuscripts demonstrates the extent to which this story, together with some other poems from the Persian Epic Cycle, was considered, at least throughout the first half of the 17th century when the manuscripts were copied, to be closely connected to the *Shahnama* tradition. Furthermore, the interpolations show how the text of the longer *Faramarznama*, like that of the *Shahnama*, was not static but could display in its different written forms a number of variations.

CONCLUSION

By means of examples of two kinds of interpolations in the supposed original version of Firdausi's *Shahnama*, this article shows how the written text of this poem over the centuries was subject to a number of changes and additions. It further gives examples of how, through these interpolations, the *Shahnama* was in later centuries brought into closer connection with one of the stories from the Persian Epic Cycle, the longer *Faramarznama*. First, the references to Khargah as Faramarz's object of conquest, as they occur in Macan's edition, form a clear indication of additions to the *Shahnama* dating from later centuries, since the verses mentioning Khargah do not appear in the older manuscripts that are judged to be more authentic. Considering the fact that in the longer

Faramarznama Khargah is one of the goals of Faramarz's military campaign, it seems possible that a number of verses were interpolated into the *Shahnama* under the influence of the story told in the later epic. Second, a redaction of the longer *Faramarznama* exists as an interpolation in four 17th-century *Shahnama* manuscripts. The link between the *Shahnama* and the *Faramarznama* is no longer supposed on the basis of the common use of a geographical name, but their connection is clearly visible from a large portion of extraneous text in the *Shahnama* that derives from the Persian epic cycle. The inclusion of this later epic in Firdausi's poem means that the 17th-century scribes of the St Petersburg, Berlin and New York manuscripts considered the story of the longer *Faramarznama* to be an essential part of the *Shahnama* tradition.

However Firdausi's version may have read originally, it is obvious that the *Shahnama* never was a static text. With its contents fluctuating more or less from one manuscript to the next, the poem throughout the centuries was adapted to accommodate external traditions. Such extraneous influences can be found in the form of interpolations of single verses or short passages, as well as entire stories, deriving from the Persian Epic Cycle, for instance the longer *Faramarznama*. The text of the longer *Faramarznama* has, in turn, been subject to influences from the *Shahnama*, as can be seen from the different versions of its introduction. It appears that both the lithographed and the two manuscript versions of the introduction were based on the *Shahnama* 'story of Kay Khusrau's review'. Whilst the 20th-century editor of the lithographed *Faramarznama* chose to copy a section of this story from Macan's edition, supplemented with three introductory verses, the two manuscripts include a paraphrase of the entire story, apparently also based on one or more later *Shahnama* manuscripts. Thus, whereas the longer *Faramarznama* was composed in the 12th century on the basis of pre-Islamic sources, it also contains additions deriving from a later date, which demonstrates how the text of this epic, like that of the *Shahnama*, was fluid and that the Persian Epic Cycle, too, was part of a living tradition.

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THE INFLUENCE OF THE *SHAHNAMA* IN THE EXTENDED VERSION
OF *ARDAY VIRAFNAMA* BY ZARTUSHT BAHRAM

Olga Yastrebova

Zartusht, son of Bahram Pazhdu is a Zoroastrian author of the second half of the 13th century, famous among his brothers in faith, and first of all as the author of the versification of Arday Viraf's¹ journey to the other world. Until the middle of the 20th century the authorship of the versified biography of the prophet Zaratusht, *Zartushtnama* ("Book of Zartusht"),² was also ascribed to him, both by the Zoroastrian tradition and European scholars,³ but as was proved by C. Rempis and in the introduction to the Iranian edition of *Arday Virafnama* ("Book of Arday Viraf") by Rahim 'Afifi, this work was not composed by Zartusht Bahram.⁴

The information about Zartusht Bahram's lifetime and biography has come down to us from two sources. The first is the colophon to the epic poem *Maulud-i Zartusht* ("Birth of Zartusht"), more widely known under the title *Zartushtnama*, composed by Kay Kavus son of Kay Khusrau from Ray about two centuries earlier. It was copied by Zartusht Bahram with a poetic colophon in which he mentioned his name and the date of copying (647 Yazdagirdi/1276). The colophon is written in verse and in the same *mutaqarib* meter as the epic; afterwards it was copied in later manuscripts as if it were part of the poem itself. In this colophon he also tells about the composition of his own poem—*Arday Virafnama*:⁵

¹ The first part of this name (Arda/Arday) originates from the Pahl. *ardā* [ʔt'y] – "righteous", while its second part is used throughout Zartusht Bahram's epic in the form (Viraf) that is traditional among the Zoroastrians, being rhymed with such words as **کوه** 'Mount Qaf' or **سیاف** 'sword-cutler, armourer'.

² Frédéric Rosenberg, ed. *Le livre de Zoroastre* (*Zarātusht nâma*).

³ See for example, Anquetil-Duperron. *Zend-Avesta*, I/2, 6; J. Wilson *The Parsi religion as contained in the Zend-Avesta*, 75, 417-27, 445; C. Rieu, *Catalogue of the Persian manuscripts*, I, 46-47; H. Ethé, E. Sachau, *Catalogue of the Persian, Turkish, Hindustani, and Pushtu manuscripts*, nos. 1947-51, col. 1112-14; E. Bertel's, *Istoriya persidskoy i tadzhikskoy literatury*, 32.

⁴ C. Rempis, "Qui est l'auteur de Zartusht-Nameh?", 337-42; Zartusht Bahram, *Ardâ-vîrâf-nâme-ye manzûm*, ed. Rahim 'Afifi, XIV-XVIII.

⁵ Rosenberg, *Le livre de Zoroastre*, ٧٨—٨٠.

چو پیروزی و یاریم داد پشت نوشتم من این قصه ز راتشت

...

نوشتم من این قصه ارجمند ز گفتار داند هوشمند
هنرمندین دارکاو س کی و راباب کیخسرو از شهرری

...

چل و هفت باششصد از یزدگرد همان ماه آبان که گیتی فسرده
من این روز آذر گفتم بدست به آبان چو بر جشن بودیم مست
شب خور نوشتم من این را بکام بدور و زگردم مرا و را تمام

...

بدل گفتم از آنکه این در پاک شود جفت شمع بود تابناک

...

مرا هاتف از غیب آواز داد که باید ترا جفت این ساز داد
چو داد اردادست این دستگاه اگر جهد نبود بود زانگاه
ز گفتار اردای ویراف رنج بیردم که آن بود آگده گنج
چو الماس نظم آوریدم بکف بر آوردم این پاک دراز صدف...

Since (the Lord) gave me success and help as His support, I wrote (i.e. copied) this story of Zartusht...

I wrote this precious story, composed by the intelligent sage
The skilful and constant in faith, Kay Kavus, his father being Kay Khusrau
from the city of Ray...

[In the year] six hundred and forty seven from Yazdagird, in that month
of Aban when the world had faded⁶

On the day of Adhur⁷ I took this in hand; on the day of Aban, when we
were drunk because of the celebration

⁶ The verb *afsurdan* / *fusurdan* has two meanings both of which suit the context well: 'to fade, wither' and 'to freeze'.

⁷ 9th day of the 8th month of the Zoroastrian calendar.

On the night of Khwar I wrote it according to my wish. In two days I finished it...
 In my heart I said: it is worthy that this pure pearl should get a match, it would become a shining torch...
 A messenger from the spiritual world challenged me: "You must create a match for it!"
 When the Creator has given such power, if one does not make an effort, it is a sin.
 I laboured over the composition of '[the Book of] Arday Viraf' which was filled with treasures.
 Having taken the diamond of verse into my hands, I withdrew this pure pearl from the shell.

The second source of information is the introductory chapter found in some of the manuscripts of the *Arday Virafnama*, which include the extended version of the epic. The difference between this and the short version found in most of the manuscripts will be discussed below.

The full text of this extended version has so far been found only in a manuscript of the National Library of Russia.⁸ The introductory chapter is also included in the text of another copy kept in the Council of Zoroastrians (Anjuman-i Zartushtiyan) in Tehran, used by Rahim 'Afifi for his critical edition of the epic, published in 1964.⁹ This chapter is entitled "On revealing the reasons of the composition of the book" and, as is clear from the title, deals with the description of circumstances under which the *Arday Virafnama* was written.

In this chapter the author mentions the birthplace of his father in a verse that is corrupted in both the Petersburg manuscript and the one used by Rahim 'Afifi. Obviously, it is to be read as follows:

زخواف از قصبه مایژن آباد که آنرا کرده بود کیخسرو آباد

The name of Zartusht's village is read by 'Afifi as *qasaba* Bizhanabad, and this information is repeated by other scholars as well¹⁰. However it seems more likely that the name should be read as Mabizhanabad; it is registered in Dihkhoda's dictionary being a village in the vicinities of Khwaf and mentioned in *Tarikh-i Sistan*.¹¹ It was also the birthplace of the 12th-

⁸ St. Petersburg, NLR, PNS 11. See brief description in: G.I. Kostygova, *Persidskie i tadzhikskie rukopisi*, I, 126, no. 353.

⁹ *Ardâvîrâf-nâme*, ed. 'Afifi, ۱۲—۲۳.

¹⁰ *Ardâvîrâf-nâme*, ed. 'Afifi, 7; Safa, *Tarikh-i adabiyat dar Iran*, III-1, 337.

¹¹ Dihkhuda, *Lughatnama*, XII, 17575.

century poet Nasir al-Hurmazdi al-Mabizhanabadi, of whom Zahir al-Din 'Ali Baihaqi (d. 565/1169–70) writes in his work *Tatimma Siwan al-hikma*.¹² The name of the poet (Hurmazdi) and Baihaqi's statement that he was "from the descendants of the Khusraus (i.e. Sassanian kings)" may indirectly signify that he had some relations or sympathies with the Zoroastrians. Thus the verse quoted above should be interpreted in the following way:

From Khwaf and *qasaba* Mabizhanabad which was built by Kay Khusrau Zartusht tells about the time of his "happy youth", how after he had been educated about the religion he had tied the *kusti* belt on his waist and become a *hirbad* like his own father. He had learned astrology and occasionally composed verse. His friends liked it a lot, praising him as the best poet of their time, and implored him to compose a book about the Zoroastrian faith.

The next event described happened soon after the death of Zartusht's father, Bahram Pazhdu, on a stormy winter night, which is colourfully and verbosely described in as many as sixty *baits*. This long description of the hardships of winter illustrates the depressed state of the spirit of Zartusht, who was mourning the death of his father. Bahram Pazhdu is said to have been a learned man, *hirbad* and astrologer, who could read Pahlavi.

Zartusht's mother, a pious woman, lit a bright fire in order to cheer her son up and gave him two books to read. One of them was *Dar mauhud-i Zartusht* ('About the birth of Zaratushtra', which should be the *Zartusht-nama* by Kay Kavus mentioned above); the other was the story of Arday Viraf, in prose. A messenger from the spiritual world came to Zartusht that night in a dream and ordered him to retell the story of Arday Viraf in verse. Supported by his mother and friends, he accomplished this work.

The epic referred to in the colophon and this introduction is known as *Arday Virafnama*; its subject is well-known from the Pahlavi book telling of the journey of the righteous man Viraz to the other world, where he witnessed the fate awaiting the souls of pious and sinful people after death.¹³ The epic, however, is not based on the famous Pahlavi version but on the rather early New Persian prose version represented in a num-

¹² *Ibid.*, XIII, 19604.

¹³ The first printed edition of Zartusht's epic was in fact included into one of the editions of the famous Pahlavi text, see Jamasp Asa, *Arda Viraf Nameh*.

ber of manuscript copies.¹⁴ The peculiarities of the language and style of this Persian prose text allow us to date it as early as 11th century, or even earlier.

Comparison of all the three versions (the Pahlavi, Persian prose and Zartusht's poetic one) shows that there is a considerable difference between the Persian prose and Pahlavi versions.¹⁵ In fact, it has been noticed by Bizhan Gheiby that there are grounds to think that the Persian prose text is from "a separate line of tradition" than the Pahlavi variant.¹⁶

It was this Persian prose text that was used by Zartusht as the basis for his versification. It is also obvious that Zartusht Bahram treated the 'original' with great respect, trying to follow it as closely as possible and even using the same lexicon. Actually, he himself stated several times that it is his intention to tell the story with maximum precision and to try not to add or omit anything from the original, as for example in these lines:¹⁷

بگفتم من چنان این داستان را که بیشی و کمی نیست آزا
چو حرف نظم بشمارى تو با نثر نیایی اندرو لحتی کم و کثر

I composed this story in such a manner, that there is neither more nor less in it

If you count the letters of the verse [comparing it] with the prose, you will not find any reduction or increase

The text of Zartusht's epic was published twice. In 1902, Jamasp Asa used a manuscript from his own collection for his edition.¹⁸ The second edition was accomplished by Rahim 'Afifi at the University of Mashhad in 1964 and has already been mentioned. The critical text of this edition was based on three manuscripts: one from the collection of the Zoroastrian Assembly of Tehran (1825 distichs); the manuscript published by Jamasp Asa (1382 distichs); and one copy from the Bibliothèque Nationale (1242 distichs)¹⁹. Of these, only the one in Tehran has considerable differences

¹⁴ The full text of this version was published in Kargar, *Ardāy-Vīrāf Nāma*. See also Yastrebova, *Prozaicheskaya persidskaya versiya*.

¹⁵ Thus the difference of the introductory parts in different versions of the "Book of Arda Viraz" was mentioned by Haug, *The book of Arda Viraf*, LXXIII.

¹⁶ Gheiby, *Ardā Vīrāz Nāmag: Some critical remarks*, 6.

¹⁷ PNS 11, f. 211r.

¹⁸ Jamasp Asa, *Arda Viraf Nameh*.

¹⁹ BNF, Supplément persan 45. See E. Blochet, *Catalogue des manuscrits persans*, 157, no. 193.

from the other two, as it contains an introductory part consisting of praise of the Creator, two prayers and the chapter “On revealing the reasons of the composition of the book”, noted above. These chapters are included in ‘Afifi’s edition.

However, his edition does not take into account the copy of the epic preserved in the National Library of Russia (NLR) in St. Petersburg, although the manuscript is mentioned in the introductory essay. ‘Afifi refers to the description of the contents of this copy published by Frédéric Rosenberg in his edition of the *Zartushtnama* in 1904.²⁰

The NLR’s codex is a collection of a number of epics attributed to Farid al-Din ‘Attar and three Zoroastrian epics: *Sad Dar* by Iranshah b. Malik-shah, *Zartushtnama* (or *Maulud-i Zartusht*) by Kay Kavus b. Kay Khusrau and *Arday Virafnama* by Zartusht Bahram. All the epics included in this manuscript were copied in Bukhara by three scribes, during the years 1653 and 1656. The three Zoroastrian epics were copied by Muhammad Qasim b. Muhammad-Jamil al-Kabuli in 1065/1654-55.

Rosenberg in his description of the contents of *Arday Virafnama* text as found in the NLR manuscript showed that only part of it deals with the story of Arday Viraf. He gives the list of chapter titles from the beginning of Viraf’s story, describing them as “different works united under this general title” (“les inscriptions des différents morceaux réunis sous ce titre général”).²¹

‘Afifi repeats the list of titles after Rosenberg and expresses the opinion that the authorship of these poetic works is not quite clear, as some of them are found as independent epics in the collection of Darab Hurmazyar.²² In any case he believes that they do not pertain to the story of Arday Viraf.²³

Nevertheless, having studied the text of the St. Petersburg manuscript, we arrived at the conclusion that there are no significant differences in the grammatical or syntactical peculiarities of the language in the different chapters. The literary style is also rather uniform; the same set of literary figures is used in different parts. The name of Zartusht Bahram is mentioned several times throughout the text and there are thus no reasons to doubt his authorship of all its parts.

²⁰ Rosenberg, *Le livre de Zoroastre*, VIII–IX.

²¹ *Ibid.*, VIII.

²² *Dârâb Hormazyâr’s rivâyat*, ed. Manokji Rustamji Unvala; intr. Jivanji Jamshedji Modi, II. The story of the Iranian prince (no. 28 in the table) is found on pp. 244-56; four parables (nos. 17-20), on pp. 305-31.

²³ *Ardâvirâf-nâme*, ed. ‘Afifi, 5-6.

Here is the full table of titles of the epic found in the St. Petersburg manuscript:

No.	Title (as appears in the MS)	Number of distichs
1	[Introduction: praise to the Creator]	93
2	درمناجات (Prayer)	67
3	درمناجات (Prayer)	134
4	در پیداکردن سبب نظم کتاب (On the revealing of the reason of the book's composition)	170
5	آغاز این داستان (Beginning of this tale)	194
6	قصه جنکرنگهاچه دانای هندی با زرتشت (Fable of the Indian sage Changranghacha and Zartusht)	368
7	ابتدای قصه اردای ویراف (Beginning of the fable of Arday Viraf)	677
8	در آیت خواستن فروهر زرتشت استفتان اشو فروهر (Prayer for help to the fravashi of Zartusht)	93
9	قصه اسکندرو طابوت (Fable of Iskandar and his bier)	46
10	قصه نوشیروان عادل و ابوزرجه (Fable of Nushirvan the Just and Buzurjmihir)	122
11	حدیث فردخشخونی (Tradition about Fradakhsh Khunbi)	36
12	قصه گاهنبار نوشیروان عادل با مرزبان کارسانی (Fable of the gahanbar performed by Nushirvan the Just and by Marzban Karsani)	112
13	صفت دوزخ و حالهای دوزخیان (Description of Hell and state of Hell's inhabitants)	9
14	آغاز شرح دوزخ و خواریهای ایشان در دوزخ (Beginning of the description of Hell and their (sinners') tortures in Hell)	401
15	آیت خواستن اردا از سروش (Arday's prayer for help to Srosh)	291
16	حکایت (Story [of the man threatened by many perils])	150
17	حکایت مرد سه دوست و کیفیت آن (Story of the man who had three friends)	105
18	حکایت شک و یقین (Story about doubtful and true things)	44
19	حکایت خادم و پادشاه آخرت (Story about a servant and the king of the other world)	196
20	[Story of the prince who married the daughter of a beggar]	312
21	حکایت سپاسداری (Story about gratitude)	31
22	حکایت اصول دین (Story about the foundations of the religion)	21
23	سوال جاماسپ از زرتشت (Question addressed by Jamasp to Zartusht)	73

No.	Title (as appears in the MS)	Number of distichs
24	آیفت خواستن امشاسفندان (Prayer for help to the Ameshasfands)	263
25	[Beginning of the last part of Arday Viraf's story]	106
26	باز آمدن اردای ویراف بدین گیتی (Arday Viraf's return to this world)	82
27	انجامیدن قصه اردای ویراف (Conclusion of the tale of Arday Viraf)	84
28	حکایت عمر بن الخطاب رضی الله عنه (Story of 'Umar b. al-Khattab, let God be pleased with him)	499
29	حکایت گریه و مویه (Story about weeping and lamentation)	33
30	حکایت گر شاسپ و آزدن آتش (Story about Garshasp and his offence against Fire)	105
31	آغاز داستان بهاریات بهرام پژدو (Beginning of the description of Spring by Bahram Pazhdu)	331

Although about three-quarters of the text is in fact not immediately connected with the story of Arday Viraf, still the introduction of most of the new subjects is logically and rhetorically justified in the preceding parts of the text.

It can be seen from this table that the story of Arday Viraf is divided into three parts; large blocks of text are added at the beginning, at the end and between these parts. The first block begins with conventional introductory chapters, containing prayers and the description of the circumstances of the book's creation. Then the author gives a brief account of the history of the world from its creation till the time of the prophet Zaratushtra, and enumerates the main events of the prophet's legendary biography. We know that Zartusht Bahram copied the epic dedicated to this matter, and the brief account in the *Arday Virafnama* text is very close to it. Zartusht adds to it the episode borrowed from some other source: the tale of the Indian sage Changranghacha's dispute with the prophet held in the presence of king Vishtasp. The dispute predictably ended with the victory of Zaratushtra, and after that the story of Iran until the time of king Ardashir is briefly retold. Ardashir unites the country, killing many kings, and looks for the means to reveal the truth of the Zoroastrian religion. Thus the story of Arday Viraf is introduced; both the epic and the Persian prose version on which it is based place Viraf's journey in the time of king Ardashir's reign.

The text following the title "Beginning of the tale of Arday Viraf" describes the process of choosing the person to perform the journey to

the other world and the description of Paradise. The last 51 *bait*s are dedicated to the praise of God and the expression of the author's gratitude to Him.

This part of Viraf's story is followed by four parables preceded with the *ayast*-prayer (asking for help) addressed to the *fravashi* (immortal soul) of the prophet Zaratusht (no. 8) and ending with the prayer to Ohrmazd, in which the author asks him to protect his soul's purity from sins (last *bait*s of no. 12). The main moral the parables treat is the impossibility of taking earthly treasures and power to the other world, the greater value of the spiritual treasures as compared with those of this world, and the greater value of the good deeds of poor people as compared with those of the wealthy and powerful.

The block of text that follows the description of Hell is also framed by two *ayast*-prayers, the first addressed to Srosh and the closing one to the Ameshasfands. This section includes six parables and three short didactic stories. The plots of four of the parables (nos. 16, 17, 19, 20) originate from the 'Tale of Barlaam and Joasaph'.²⁴ All the parables dwell on different aspects of the transitory nature of this world. Two of the last three extracts render the sayings ascribed to the famous priest Adurbad Mahrasfandan; the first mentions how in every misfortune he found ten reasons to thank Ohrmazd for it, and the second describes his answer about the basic principles of the religion given in the form of a riddle. The last story contains the answer of Zartusht to the sage Jamasp about the five main duties of a pious man for which he is to answer after death. Zartusht's answer is followed by the appeal to the reader to observe all the moral principles and rituals of the religion, which will save him from punishment in Hell after death. The concluding *ayast*-chapter finishes with the address by the author to himself not to forget the main subject and return to the story of Arday Viraf.

In the last portion of Arday Viraf's story the hero leaves Hell, is brought to the throne of Ohrmazd and returns to this world. His story is recorded by the scribe. While describing the process of writing the author uses rather complicated metaphor: the pen is represented as a sick and lean Hindu servant messenger, who listens to the message of the scribe and brings it to the white Rumi (paper), making the journey standing on his head, after which he drowns himself in a black well (ink-pot), etc. Having

²⁴ These parables can be found in different versions of this text. See e.g. the Russian translation of the Arabic version of the tale, *Povest' o Varlaame pustynnike i Ioasafe tsareviche indyskom*, 47-50, 66-67.

Viraf's story recorded by the scribe, king Ardashir ordered copies to be made and sent to all the corners of the country, and the religion flourished until it was once again supported by the ordeal performed by Adurbad Mahrasfandan. In the chapter "Conclusion of the tale of Arda Viraf" (no. 27), Zartusht Bahram writes about his completion of the versification of the story and praises the merits of his poem.

This chapter ends with a mention of the *Shahnama*:²⁵

برین دین کیومرث گزیده وز و تائیز [د] گرد این دین رسیده
 دران ایامشان بنگر که چون بود که هر دم داد و آبادی فزون بود
 بخوان در شاه نامه تابدانی که چون بودست دوران یکانی . . .

...[*Bihdins* are] in this religion of the chosen Kayumars, from whom this religion reached to Yazdagird

Look how it was in their days, how every moment justice and cultivation increased!

Read in the *Shahnama* so that you know how the ages of the Kayanids were

With this reference to the age of the Kayanids and comparison with his own epoch, the author passes to the next subject, the story of caliph 'Umar and the captured Iranian prince.²⁶ The Iranian prince predicts to the caliph the future of the world, from the Arab conquest till the late 13th century, which is obviously viewed by the author as the time very close to the end of Zaratusht's millennium, as described in *Bahman-Yasht* and other apocalyptic texts. The next story tells about the inhabitants of the legendary fortress of Kang, who never mourned or cried for their dead; and the last subject is the story of the great warrior Garshasp, who was

²⁵ PNS 11, f. 212 r.

²⁶ The outset of the story is similar to that of the famous legend about the Iranian princess Shahrbanu (see M.A. Amir-Moezzi, "Shahrbānū, Dame du pays d'Iran et Mère des Imams"), but the development of the plot is borrowed from a fable found in *Qabus-nama*, where a vizier is about to be punished by the king and chooses his penalty to be exile to a ruined and desolated village. But in the whole country there was not found such a ruined place, and thus the vizier proved that his previous service to the country had been industrious (*Guzida-yi Qabusnama*, 154-55, 266-67). In the story of the Iranian prince it is 'Umar who offers the captive to choose any place to live, and the prince asks for an abandoned and ruined village. The absence of even one such village in the whole country shows the Arabs (and the readers of the story) how prosperous Iran was under the rulers of Iranian descent.

denied the right to enter Paradise because he once treated fire improperly. It is taken from some Pahlavi text, as is stated in the very first line. Among the preserved Pahlavi texts that describe the heroic deeds of Garshasp and the sin he committed against fire we can mention the Pahlavi *Rivāyat* accompanying the *Dadistan ī Denīg*²⁷ and *Dadestan ī Menog ī Khrat*.²⁸

Further we read that when the author reached this place in his book the season of Spring arrived. The last chapter describing its beauties is an example of the genre of *Bahariyat*. The only reason why it is attributed to Zartusht's father Bahram Pazhdu is the title, in which his name is mentioned. At the same time the language and style are not different from the rest of the text, and there is no mention of Zartusht's father as a poet in the introductory part, so it seems quite probable that the *Bahariyat* also belongs to Zartusht himself.

The analysis of the whole text as found in PNS 11 allows us to reach the conclusion that this manuscript is not a mechanical compilation of epic fragments on completely different subjects, but an extended version of the *Arday Viraf nama* epic, written by Zartusht Bahram himself. In this extended version the story of Arday Viraf forms only the pivot of the composition, serving as a framework story.

All the subsidiary subjects of this version are connected with the main story by association. They make the composition of the text rather complicated, but are called upon to introduce several contexts in which the story of Arday Viraf is placed.

The first context is the historical one. The author Zartusht Bahram obviously tries to show this story as one of the most important events in the religious history of mankind. In this version we have a brief account of mythological and legendary history, starting with the world's creation until the reign of Ardashir, placed in nos. 5 and 6. The historical events up to the Arab conquest are referred to in the concluding verses of no. 27. The history of Iran after the Arab conquest until the coming of the Mongols is to be found in the revelation of the Iranian prince to the caliph 'Umar (no. 28), which ends with the apocalyptical description of the end of Zaratushtra's millennium. Thus this version characterizes the vision of

²⁷ A.V. Williams, ed. *The Pahlavi Rivāyat accompanying the Dādestan ī Dēnīg*, I, 103-11; II, 39-43.

²⁸ O.M. Chunakova, *Zoroastriyskie teksty*, 102.

Arday Viraf as one of the events of the Zoroastrian historical tradition with great spiritual importance.

The second context reveals the didactic and moralizing matters that are usually associated with the topic of death and man's destiny after death. They involve the transitory nature of this world's treasures and glory, the importance of preparing one's soul for the last journey through purifying it from sin, doing good deeds, rejecting the wealthy life, observing religious rituals, etc. These subjects are treated in a number of parables and in Zartusht's own reflections that come after many of these parables.

The third aspect of this version is the importance of the author's work for the inner psychological condition of the author himself, and the change it produced in his perception of the death of his own father Bahram Pazhdu. Thus in the beginning, when mentioning his father's death, Zartusht gives a lengthy description of Winter, cold and bad weather, while at the end of the PNS 11 we find a much more lengthy description of Spring, its beauties and pleasures.

The manuscript from the National library of Russia is the only known complete copy of this version of the text. The Tehran manuscript used by 'Afifi seems to be an extract from it, with most of the subsidiary subjects omitted. There are also a number of manuscripts originating from India and containing the text entitled *Changranghachanama* or *Qissa-yi Changranghacha*. They probably originate from some incomplete and damaged copy of the same version as we find in PNS 11.²⁹

The influence of the *Shahnama* can be traced in both the historical and didactic aspects of the extended version of *Arday Virafnama*.

Historical Aspect

The Pahlavi Book of the Righteous Viraz (*Arda Viraz Namag*) of course gives great importance to the event described in it. But the historical attribution given in its introductory part is uncertain. The main reason why it was decided to find a person who would be righteous enough to visit the world of the dead and return to this world is described as the need to fortify the position of the Zoroastrian religion. This initiative comes from the priesthood (*moy-mardān* and *dastvarān ī dēn*) who summon all the people to the temple of fire and choose seven candidates,

²⁹ O.M. Yastrebova, "The manuscripts of «Changranghache-name» and «Arday-Viraf-name» by Zartosht-e Bahram-e Pazhdu", 251-62.

from whom they finally select Viraz. Although the famous spiritual leader Adurbad Mahrasfandan is mentioned in this introduction, the dating of the event remains uncertain.³⁰

However, the Persian book of Arday Viraf written in prose, which was used by Zartusht as the basis for his epic, in its introductory part asserts that the event took place during the rule of Ardashir Papakan, after he defeated all the 90 (or 96) local kings in Iran and united the country. Moreover, it was his idea to do some miraculous deed to strengthen the position of the Zoroastrian faith, and it is by his order that priests were gathered to decide how miraculous evidence of the effectiveness of Zoroastrian rituals could be presented.³¹ This is a tribute to the epic tradition, contrasted with the priestly tradition to which the subject itself belongs.

As we have already mentioned, the extended poetic version of *Arday Virafnama* not only refers the subject to the time of legendary Ardashir, but describes it as one of the main events of the history of mankind from the creation of the world until the coming of the end of Zaratusht's millennium.

After the praise of Ohrmazd and introductory prayers, following the conventional account of the reasons and circumstances of the composition of the book, the narration comes to the chapter entitled "Beginning of this tale", which starts with the words:³²

کون ای زرتشت بن بهرام بژدو	بیاور شرح حال و قصه برگو
چو سوی نظم این بشتافتم من	نه سفته در بدینسان یافتم من
که چون ایزد تعالی این جهانرا	بداد این تخمه و این مردمانرا
کیومرث آفرید اول جهاندار	و زو آورد فرزندان پدیدار...

Now, O Zartusht, son of Bahram Pazhd, bring forth the description of the situation and tell the story

When I hastened to put this in verse, I found a pearl like this that had not been pierced

When God created this world, this seed and these people

He created Kayumars as the first ruler of the world, and from him He brought children...

³⁰ F. Vahman, *Arda Wiraz Namaq*, 77-81, 191-92.

³¹ Kargar, *Ardāy-Virāf Nāma*, 105-107, ۹-۳.

³² PNS 11, f. 166r.

Zartusht mentions very concisely the mythological history of the world from the first man, Kayumars, until the time of the prophet Zaratushtra. Although he names Kayumars as the first king (as he is described in the *Shahnama*), he mentions that his rule lasted for 3,000 years, which corresponds rather with the religious cosmology of Zoroastrianism, according to which Kayumars was the first man created by Ohrmazd, together with the bull, during the first period of creation when the world was in its ideal state. Zartusht writes that after these 3,000 years all the new kings were righteous and pure and ruled according to the will of Ohrmazd, receiving guidance from him through visions or divine messengers, and their period also lasted 3,000 years. The author does not give any further details about them but instead urges the reader to learn more from Firdausi's *Shahnama*.³³

بخوان در شاه نامه کار ایشان ترا روشن شود کردار ایشان
که فردوسی طوسی یاد کرد دست روان آن یکزادشاد کردست

Read about their work in *Shahnama*, their deeds will become clear to you
For Firdausi of Tus has mentioned them; he has made the souls of these
Kayanids happy

However, he further mentions Jamshid and Faridun, describing them as wise kings who received the knowledge of religion from Ohrmazd. He also mentions that Faridun became king after Jamshid, which does not correspond with the *Shahnama*, in which Jamshid is killed by Zahhak and Faridun becomes king only after defeating him. Zartusht mentions that during these 3,000 years although the kings were righteous, still some people such as Zahhak were misled by Ahriman and became evil. The Creator took pity on mankind and sent them the knowledge of his religion through his prophet Zaratushtra.

Thus we see that Zartusht tries to combine the epic traditions of the *Shahnama* with the Zoroastrian idea of the periods of the world. Also the main feature of the legendary kings Kayumars, Jamshid and Faridun that he stresses is that they received religion from Ohrmazd.

Furthermore, Zartusht writes that the prophet appeared in the middle of the epoch of the existence of mankind. He mentions that the total duration of the world's existence is equal to 12,000 years, divided into four periods. In the first period Kayumars and a bull were created and the world was pure and unspoiled. Then Ahriman arrived, the ideal world

³³ PNS 11, f. 166v.

was spoiled and men appeared. The prophet arrived after 3,000 years, in the middle of the epoch of mankind, and 3,000 years after him the *ras-takhiz* (Resurrection) will take place. This account is obviously based on religious traditions, such as, for example, *Bundahishn*.³⁴

Thus Zartusht Bahram seems to consider the *Shahnama* to be as important an authority as the Pahlavi religious writings, although he gets somewhat confused when he has to combine these two traditions. At first he describes Kayumars as the first king and a teacher of the people, rather similar to the characteristics he is given in the *Shahnama*, and later tells about him and the bull as the first creations of Ohrmazd, according to the religious textual tradition.

The story of the prophet Zartusht that follows is retold, however, not after the *Shahnama*, but after the *Zartushtnama*, familiar to Zartusht Bahram as noted above. One episode of the prophet's biography, not found in either source is described in the chapter entitled "Tale of the Indian sage Changranghacha and Zartusht". After it, Zartusht Bahram mentions the 3,000 years of the blessed epoch after Zartusht, when his religion brought justice and prosperity to the people. This epoch lasted until the time of Iskandar, who according to the religious writings is a creation of Ahriman, an evil demon, destroyer of the faith and the country of Iran, killer of the righteous and the wise. It is well reflected in the introduction to the Pahlavi book of Arday Viraz where he is called "*petyārag ī wad-baxt ī ahlomōy ī druvand ī anāg-kardār Aleksandar <ī> Hrōmāyīg ī Muzrāyīg-mānishn*"—"wicked, wretched, heretic, sinful, maleficent Alexander the Roman, resident of Egypt".³⁵ The personality of Iskandar here, in this part of Zartusht Bahram's epic, is represented following the Zoroastrian religious tradition as a negative character:

پس از سیصد پدید آمد سکندر بدو در فعل بد چون در سگ اندر

After three hundred [years] Iskandar appeared, in him evil conduct was like in a dog

It is curious that Iskandar here is compared in his mischief with a dog, an animal highly respected by Zoroastrians. But it seems that the author was so much tempted to use *tajnis* (homonymy) based on the similarity in

³⁴ *Zoroastriyskie teksty*, 310-11; Mary Boyce, ed. *Textual sources for the study of Zoroastrianism*, 21, 45-48.

³⁵ *Arday Viraz Namag*, 77, 191.

writing of the words *Sikandar* and *sag-andar* here that he neglected this point and thus form prevailed over meaning.

The time of strife that followed Alexander's conquest of Iran ended only with the arrival of Ardashir, founder of the Sasanian dynasty. Thus the thread of the narration finally brings us to the main subject—the story of Viraf.

We also find the mention of the *Shahnama* as an authority for the history of the legendary Kayanids in the verses from the concluding part of the story of Arday Viraf (no. 27), already quoted. Thus the story of Arday Viraf's journey is placed within the context of the world's mythological and real history, as one of its central events. The epic tradition based on the text of Firdausi's famous poem seems to play a very important part in the poet's vision of this history, although it sometimes does not correspond very well with the religious tradition.

Didactic Aspect

The subject of the main story itself deals with the problem of death and recompense for sins and good deeds. However, the Pahlavi book is very restrained in showing any personal attitude; the author's personality or his consideration of the events described are not reflected in the text.

The Persian version of the story in prose, being also rather dry and laconic, nevertheless contains a passage of a didactic nature—the admonition given to the hero by Srosh after he witnesses righteous shepherds in Paradise.³⁶ This *andarz* is remarkable first of all because it is very close to a passage from the famous "Tale of Barlaam and Joasaph";³⁷ it deals with the impossibility of enjoying pleasure without enduring some privation prior to it or after it, and with the impossibility of finding satisfaction in the fulfillment of any human desire.

Zartusht naturally repeats this *andarz* in his versification of the subject. He makes the *andarz* of Srosh more verbose, adding more passages discussing the inconstancy of this world, youth, human health and other pleasures.

In the extended version of the epic Zartusht continues to develop the didactic trend. The same matters are illustrated by a number of incorporated parables (nos. 9-12, 16-20), as well as the author's numerous reflec-

³⁶ St. Petersburg, IOM, C 1869, ff. 142r-143v.

³⁷ Cf. the Arabic version, *Povest' o Varlaame pustynnike...*, 27.

tions in the parts of the text added to the main subject. They all help to view the story of Arday Viraf in didactic perspective.

As mentioned, four of the parables are borrowed from the "Tale of Barlaam and Joasaph". They are: "The story of the man threatened by many perils" (this has no title in the manuscript), "The story of the man who had three friends", "The story about a servant and the king of the other world" and "The story of the prince who married the daughter of a beggar" (nos. 16, 17, 19, 20). We do not know from what version of that famous book they came to Zartusht, as we do not know how many versions of it existed in Zartusht's time and if there were any in Persian. However, the parables from the "Tale of Barlaam and Joasaph" seem to have been quite popular in early classical Persian literature. Thus we find one of the four used by Zartusht (no. 19) both in the *Marzbannama* ("The story of a slave and a merchant")³⁸ and in 'Attar's epic *Bulbulnama*.³⁹

Other parables are based on different sources. Among them we find the story of Iskandar's funeral. Before his death king Iskandar gave detailed directions about how the funeral procession should be organized, and ordered that his body should be put on a bier with his bare head and empty hands not covered by winding sheets. This was to symbolise the impossibility even for such a mighty and rich king to carry any of his treasures into the other world.

At the time of Zartusht Bahram there were at least two Persian poetic versions of the life of Alexander: Firdausi's *Shahnama* and Nizami's *Sharafnama*. Both these epics narrate the Iskandar giving orders about his funeral. However, in the *Shahnama* there is no mention of a symbolical uncovering of either Iskandar's head or his hands; the king only orders how his bier is to be decorated with brocade and incense.⁴⁰

Nizami, on the contrary, mentions that Iskandar ordered one of his hands to be visible out of the bier with a handful of dust in it, while heralds were to explain the meaning: the king who had acquired so many treasures is now leaving this world carrying only a handful of dust.⁴¹

Although there is less resemblance to the episode in the *Shahnama* than to Nizami's version, it is still remarkable that Zartusht chose Iskandar as the hero for his parable, depicting him as a sage. He obviously follows here the so-called 'national' or secular epic tradition, which was reflected

³⁸ *Marzban-nama*, ed. Khalil Khatib Rahbar, 104-25.

³⁹ E. Bertel's, *Sufizm i sufiyskaya literatura*, 76-79.

⁴⁰ B, VII, 105.

⁴¹ Nizami, *Khamsa*, 132.

in the historical chronicles of the *Khwaday Namag*, evidently an important source for the *Shahnama*.⁴²

The next parable (no. 10) is based on an episode borrowed most probably directly from the *Shahnama*, although the epic is not mentioned in the text. It deals with Khusrau Anushirvan and his famous counsellor, the sage Buzurjmihir. As the story in *Dastan-i Kisra ba Buzurjmihir* tells,⁴³ Anushirvan was hunting in the wilderness and came to rest with Buzurjmihir in some nice place. The king fell asleep for a while. Buzurjmihir saw a large raven come and peck pearls from the king's bracelet. This started him thinking about the vanity and decay of life; he became upset and started biting his lips. The shah woke up and seeing that, thought Buzurjmihir was eating something alone. The sage didn't answer the questions of the shah, who got angry and imprisoned Buzurjmihir in a castle.

All this part of the story is omitted by Zartusht. He starts directly with Buzurjmihir's imprisonment and tells how the king sent his servant to ask how Buzurjmihir was feeling. The sage answered that his circumstances are better than those of the king. The king gets angrier and makes the condition of Buzurjmihir's imprisonment more and more cruel, but the sage keeps on repeating:⁴⁴

جوابش داد جای ارتنگ و تارست ولی آسانترم از شاه کارست

He answered: although this place is narrow and dark, but my circumstances are easier than those of the king

بد و گفتا که پیغام ببر رو که روز آسانترم از روز خسرو

He said: take my message, go, that my day is easier than that of Khusrau!

Finally the king comes to ask the sage why he believes that the tortures and privations make him happier than the king on his throne, and Buzurjmihir's answer is the following: death is inevitable for everybody, but a poor and wretched man enduring hardships and sufferings sees it as deliverance from his misfortunes, while the king has to leave behind all his treasures, power and worldly pleasures, which makes death hard for him.

Again, there is no direct evidence that Zartusht borrowed this subject directly from the *Shahnama*, but since we know that he was familiar with

⁴² A. Christensen, *Les Kayanides*, 146-52.

⁴³ B, VIII, 255-60.

⁴⁴ PNS 11, f. 182 v.

the book it seems quite probable. It is typical for the parable genre to describe a situation without paying attention to its reasons and the motives of the heroes. By omitting the first part of the story Zartusht makes it a perfect subject for a didactic parable, concluding with a long passage of his own reflections about the vanity of the world, the need to follow the dictates of reason and to take care of the future awaiting one's soul after death.

Such passages form the conclusion of most of the parables that are found in this version of the *Arday Virafnama*, and the *Shahnama* becomes a source of examples for his didactic admonitions. Thus the concluding passage of the story of the man threatened by many dangers (no. 16) contains a lamentation in which the author rhetorically asks where the famous kings and heroes are gone. He mentions almost the complete set of the most popular figures of the *Shahnama*: Kayumars, Hushang, Tahmuras, Jamshid, Zahhak, Faridun, Tur, Iraj, Salm, Manuchihr, Nauzar, Zav, Tus, Gustaham, Afrasiyab, Tahmasb, Garshasb, Kay Qubad, Kay Kavus, Siyavush, Kay Khusrau, Luhrasb, Gushtasb, Isfandiyar, Jamasb, Bahman, Rustam, Humay, Darab, Dara, Iskandar, the Ashkaniyans, Ardashir and all the Sasanian kings.

We may note that in this passage Iskandar's characteristics are again given in accordance with the *Shahnama*:⁴⁵

بگشت وجست دروی آب حیوان	بکا اسکندری کوگردیکهان
نخواهی ماند دروی چندرنجی	باخرفت زین جای سپنجی

Where is Iskandar, who went around the world seeking the water of life?
At the end he went from this transient place; you will not stay in it however
sad you may be [about it]

Another similar passage is in parable no. 19; here the *Shahnama* kings are not enumerated in strict chronological order:

برون رفتند از این دنیا پر از غم	کیومرث و فریدون ایرج و جم
فرو برداژدهای دهرافسوس . . .	قباد و خسرو و کسری و کاوس

Kayumars and Faridun, Iraj and Jam went away from this world, filled with
sorrow

Qubad and Khusrau, Kisra and Kavus were swallowed by the dragon of
time, alas!

⁴⁵ Quoted after PNS 11, ff. 193v-194r; also see: *Dârâb Hormazyâr's rivâyat*, 305-31.

We can note that Iskandar is mentioned here in the company of anti-heroes.⁴⁶

ضحاک افراسیاب اسکندر امکن بناکامه دهند این خاک را تن

Zahhak, Afrasiyab, Iskandar the most able, in disappointment [they] give their bodies to this dust

In the chapter entitled “Arday’s prayer for help to Srosh” (no. 15), there is also a passage in which the author tells the reader that even if he acquires the qualities of the ancient heroes this will not help him to avoid death.⁴⁷ Zartusht enumerates the Iranian epic kings and heroes, mentioning the main qualities that made them famous:

پاکی گر شوی همچون سیاوش بر ارد مرگ از تو دود و آتش
اگر از تخت و فر [کی] خسروی تو چو روزت سر شود کی خسروی تو . . .

If you are equal to Siyavush in purity, death [still] will bring fire and smoke out of you

If you are a Kay Khusrau because of your throne and farr, when your days end, will you be a khusrau (king)?

He mentions the purity (پاکی) of Siyavush, Kay Khusrau’s throne and royal *farr* (تخت و فر), Jamshid’s royal *farr* and rank (فروجاه), Faridun’s magic (نیرنگ), Jamasp’s wisdom and reason (عقل و هوش جاماسپ), Zahhak’s witchcraft (جادویی), Afrasiyab’s bellicosity (حمله), Nushirvan’s justice (عدل), Bahram Gur’s festivity (شادی), Tahmuras’ affairs (کار و بار), Iskandar’s conquering of the world (جهانگیری), Parviz’s kingdom and throne (ملک و تخت), Rustam’s victoriousness (فیروزی), Bahram Chubin’s rebellion (فتنه), Zal’s long life (اگر تو عمر همچون زال داری) — “If you have the life [as long] as that of Zal...”, Garshasp’s virility (مردی), and the brazen-body (رویین تن) of Isfandiyar. The only personage not related to the *Shahnama* in this list is Qarun, known for his riches (گنج و مال).

Zartusht Bahram was obviously familiar with Firdausi’s *Shahnama*; in his perception its epic legends are to be viewed as real historical events, probably even to a larger extent than for his Muslim contemporaries. For him they are not just entertaining legends about the glorious past, but

⁴⁶ PNS 11, f. 199r.

⁴⁷ PNS 11, f. 191v.

truthful accounts of the continuing universal struggle between good and evil. The extended version of Zartusht Braham's *Arday Virafnama* shows the familiarity of Zoroastrians with the *Shahnama* as early as the 13th century. The *Arday Virafnama* is also an interesting example of how the heroic epic tradition can be merged with the Zoroastrian priestly cosmological and historical tradition into one literary work, and at the same time some of the *Shahnama*'s subjects are transformed for use as admonition.

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PICTURING EVIL: IMAGES OF *DIVS* AND THE RECEPTION
OF THE *SHAHNAMA*¹

Francesca Leoni

I know not where I've seen, but in a book,
That someone in his dream saw the Devil;
A fir-tree in stature, a hur to see;
Light gleaming from his countenance like the sun.
(The man) went up and said: "Can this be you?!,
Is it not rather an angel, so fair?
You, whose face is thus fair as the moon,
Why are you in the world, a bed-time tale for ugliness?
Why has the artist in the emperor's portico
Made you morose-faced, ugly and corrupt?"
Hearing which words, the demon of inverse fortune
Plaintively brought forth a cry and a howl,
Saying, "O man of fair fortune! That is not my form!
But the brush is in the foeman's hand!
Their root from Paradise I overturned,
Now in revenge they depict me ugly!"

Sa'di, *Bustan*.²

In Sa'di's parable of the dervish who became a vizier, a wise man is accused by the emperor of being a malicious foe plotting against his kingdom. In response to this insinuation, the dervish recounts a story about Iblis and his appearance, which was radiant in origin, but was made hideous by his enemies. Although the tale is meant to warn the reader about the misleading character of appearances, the remark about Iblis' dreadful look is notable for at least another reason. When depicted, the devil looks ugly; physical hideousness becomes the external mark of his inner wickedness.

The *Shahnama*, the Persian epic completed by Abu'l-Qasim Firdausi in A.D. 1010, abounds in stories that have demonic beings, called *divs*, as protagonists. The fact that many of these tales were also popular pictorial

¹ I would like to thank Prof. Charles Melville for kindly inviting me to attend the conference at which this paper was first given, and for his valuable editorial suggestions while preparing the article for publication.

² Sa'di, *Morals pointed and tales adorned*, 25-26.

subjects from around 1300 offers a great deal of evidence to explore the above-mentioned correspondence between evil and ugliness, which is the topic of this chapter.³ The issue is particularly pertinent to the broader discourse of the reception of the *Shahnama*, the theme around which this volume is structured. As I aim to demonstrate, images of *divs* were not casual pictorial hodge-podges, but reflected well-rooted cultural ideas and preconceptions about what was deemed evil in the pre-modern Persian world. This aspect greatly enhanced their anti-heroic role in the context of an epic such as the *Shahnama*, permeated by the idea of the clash of Good and Evil. In this sense, not only did illustrations help to transmit specific cultural ideals, but by means of these they also diversified the process of reception of the poem's contents and core message.

The first episode I would like to consider is that of the expedition headed by Hushang to kill the Black Div. According to the story, not long after the first king Kayumars instituted royalty the Black Div murdered Siyamak, the shah's only son, drawn by envy for his success and prosperity.⁴ Yet the first heir to the throne of Iran was survived by a son, Hushang, who promised to avenge him. The latter's mission against the Black Div, and the consequent killing of the demon, represents the actual first victory of mankind over the forces of evil, whose presence continued to represent a threat to civilization in spite of Kayumars' initial efforts to control them.⁵ Tens of paintings illustrate this important act against the Ahrimanic enemy. However, for the purpose of this discussion I am going to analyze only three representative examples taken from manuscripts spanning from the 14th to the 16th century, and focus on the ways in which *divs* are represented in each of them.⁶

³ Although stories and cycles from the *Shahnama* inspired various forms of pictorial art well before 1300, the earliest surviving illustrated manuscripts of this epic date from this time. These represent the basis of my analysis in this essay. For an earlier pictorial use of subjects related to the *Shahnama*, see Boris Marshak, *Legends, tales, and fables in the art of Sogdiana*, esp. 25-108; for an in depth study of the earliest illustrated codices of the Persian epic the most systematic study remains Marianna S. Simpson, *The illustration of an epic: the earliest Shahnama manuscripts*.

⁴ Firdausi, *Shahnama*, ed. Dj. Khaleghi-Motlagh (henceforth KM), I, 22-23, vs. 32-35.

⁵ KM, I, 24-25, vs. 60-66.

⁶ The timeframe is determined by the fact that 1300 is roughly the date to which the earliest extant illustrated *Shahnama* is attributed, while the 16th century represents the most significant phase for the transformation of the iconography of *divs*.

One of the earliest versions of this episode comes from a mid-14th-century *Shahnama*, which is currently in a private collection (fig. 1, pl. 3). The painting follows a relatively simple layout and is yet overcrowded, with a number of characters whose features and actions are not always easy to discern. Their activities seem to refer to different moments of the fight combined by the painter in the same image, a practice that is not rare in the Persian pictorial tradition. Hence, the frontal plane of the painting offers us the aftermath of the battle, in which prince Hushang—the standing figure with a braided coiffure wearing a long robe—and his grandfather Kayumars—the crowned character sitting on the elephant—look at the just vanquished demon, that is the dark and undistinguishable creature lying on the ground. In the background, instead, the fight is still going on, with two monstrous *divs* battling against a couple of royal soldiers. In spite of their upright position and humanoid bodies, these beings look more like animals with their oversized dog-like faces crowned by curved bovine black horns. Their subhuman status is further expressed in their scanty clothing, which covers only the part of the body comprised between the waist and the knees. The animal hybrid we are faced with in this painting is the earliest and most common form of representation of the *div*, a formula that, while regularly used to represent this creature through time, will also undergo a series of significant transformations in the course of the period considered by this article.

In a mid-15th-century *Shahnama* in the Art and History Trust, Washington D.C., the illustration of Hushang's vindictive mission against the Black Div depicts another phase of the battle, and specifically the moment in which the prince finishes off the monster (fig. 2, pl. 4). The main fighters occupy the lower half of the image, which extends beyond the frame where an angel is about to capture a second *div* trying to escape, while two separate groups of spectators observe the events from behind the mountains. The brown and weakened Black Div coarsely sits on the ground, bleeding heavily from the blow that Hushang has just struck. His exceedingly long clawed hand is raised in an unclear gesture—defensive or supplicating?—accompanied by a grimace that is equally difficult to interpret: aggressive or pained? His appearance has yet changed from before. The head now resembles that of a lion, while the rest of his massive body, more or less human in shape, is nonetheless characterized by a series of other animal features: small round ears, tusks, a single branchy horn, round (flaming) eyes, and hooves.

It is in the pictorial production associated with the patronage of the Safavid dynasty (1501-1736) that other, more substantial changes affected the imagery of *divs*. The painting of Hushang killing the Black Div from the renowned *Shahnama-yi Shahi* or *Shahnama* of Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524-76) offers the first example of such transformations, which most of the manuscripts produced during the 16th century, and well into the 17th, reproduced (fig. 3, pl. 5). In a dazzling and colour-bursting page, the royal cortege headed by Kayumars and preceded by an army of angels is about to disperse a horde of colorful *divs* already running in all directions. At the very centre of the painting, a young and preciously dressed Hushang firmly grasps their leader, the Black Div, a horrendous creature whose physical features—particularly feet, hands, and overall size—have yet lost most of their animal-like quality, looking closer to those of his noble adversary in terms of shape and proportion. The human resemblance is further emphasized in this and other *divs*' pronounced bellies and male sexual attributes, the latter a detail unseen until this moment (fig. 3, detail 1).⁷ Also worthy of notice are the expressions of fear and rage that animate these demons and that are hardly ever seen in comparable form on their opponents, who remain virtually unimpressed by the dramatic events happening before their eyes (fig. 3, detail 2). Likewise, the *divs*' body language is more dramatic than the one animating humans. In this specific painting, they are depicted as running away, kneeling and asking for mercy, hiding and, at the same time, anxiously warning their fellows from their sheltered marginal location (fig. 3, detail 3). Differently, their human pursuers—symbols of the ruling order—respect consolidated conventions by conforming to patterns of composure and moderation that are regularly seen in paintings, and that are traditionally evoked in poetic sources as well. Even though caricaturized, at this point *divs* look far more 'human' with their exposed, sexualized bodies and highly emotional expressions than the men trying to fight them. What we witness, therefore, is a progressive anthropomorphization of their imagery, although this is accomplished by emphasizing features that are not normally seen in relation to human beings, who are instead usually distinguished by a more modest and proper appearance.

⁷ A partial exception is represented by some of the demons associated with the enigmatic Muhammad Siyah Qalam, represented naked and with their genitalia exposed. For a reproduction, see David Roxburgh, ed. *Turks: a journey of a thousand years*, 184-85, figs. 139-40.

A first consideration that the visual discrepancy between humans and *divs* prompts is that the characters that impersonate positive models manifest their virtuous nature through physical qualities such as beauty and harmonious bodies, and a decorous attitude, conveyed by a controlled expressivity and fine manners. Differently, *divs* are ugly, dark, monstrous, and exaggerated in both their corporeal manifestation—with extra-sized bodies and disproportioned limbs—and emotive characterization—distinguished by uncontrolled gestures and violent actions. The clash of opposites of which the two are protagonist in the text is thus magnified by the pictorial juxtaposition of contrasting aesthetic features that clearly evoke conflicting ideas relating good and virtue with physical harmony, on the one hand, and wickedness and sin with ugliness and corporeal disharmony, on the other hand. The efficacy and success of these visual solutions resided in the existence of already accepted correspondences between certain exterior features and inner characteristics. Images mostly reiterated in pictorial form cultural ideas and preconceptions that were largely familiar to their viewers and that easily triggered in their minds broader and more meaningful associations.

Among the various purposes that the visualization of hideousness in relation to *divs* served, that of reinforcing and communicating a distinctive notion of uprightness was evidently a priority. Indeed, this was a constant aspiration of the *Shahnama*, which owes a good deal of its fortune to the moral exempla offered by its characters and stories to its readers, who were primarily, although not exclusively, rulers. Images such as those of *divs* could only enhance this moralizing purpose, because they cemented in their viewers' minds the suggested correspondences. There is even the possibility that these images may have functioned as warnings about the observable quality that immoral attitudes and sinful behaviours were believed to get on the Day of Judgment, thereby encouraging their viewers to maintain a proper conduct and modest attitude in life.⁸ That images were not meant to linger innocuously in the pages of a book is even hinted in the earliest preface to the *Shahnama*, in which paintings

⁸ The Qur'an explicitly states that in the afterlife the blessed will be recognizable by their luminous glow while the damned will be distinguished by the physical trace of their sins (Qur'an 86:23-24, 35; 18:31; 36:56, and 76:13). For a more articulated discussion of this and related aspects, see Francesca Leoni, "The revenge of Ahriman: images of *divs* in the *Shahnama*, ca. 1300-1600", esp. 163-74, and 188-91.

are considered as desirable additions to texts because they bring stories “nearer to understanding.”⁹

The possibility that certain corporeal features anticipated precise moral qualities was not a new idea in the Islamic world and had been widely discussed by the *‘ilm al-firasa*, or science of physiognomy. This was an extremely popular discipline in the medieval period, which consisted of interpreting the moral value of people by analyzing their facial and bodily characteristics. The practice found easy application in a number of contexts including so-called ‘mirrors for princes’. As early as the 11th century, kings were advised to develop this skill in order to take important decisions such as appointing trustworthy viziers, choosing good slaves, and even marrying fecund wives.¹⁰ Similarly, several historical accounts of past rulers contain detailed descriptions of their physical appearance, stressing the moral traits that were thought to be external manifestations of their distinctive virtues.¹¹ The idea had its ultimate origin and ideal expression in the Prophet Muhammad, whose exemplary behaviour and conduct were believed to have been matched by a fine physical profile. His cousin and son-in-law ‘Ali describes the Prophet as a man of medium height, not thin but with firm flesh, strong bones, large shoulders, with a round face and large black eyes.¹²

The idea that a disharmonious and displeasing appearance could be a presage of an obscure temperament and evil nature is a logical extension of this discourse. Although less frequent than accounts of virtuous and good-looking personages, anecdotes and moralizing tales considering physical ugliness as the exterior manifestation of an evil nature do exist. Particularly meaningful is another parable from Sa’di’s *Bustan*, in which the protagonist is victim of the preconceptions associated with ugliness

⁹ Vladimir Minorsky, “The older preface to the *Shah-nama*”, 159-79, 168, note 3. The observation has also been noted by Abolala Soudavar, “The Han-Lin academy and the Persian royal library-atelier”, 467-84, 468.

¹⁰ Such was the case of the *Qabusnama* of Kay Kavus b. Iskandar, in which a whole chapter (23) is dedicated to the examination of the physical traits of slaves destined to serve in specific activities. For this and other uses of the science of physiognomy, see Robert Hoyland, “The Islamic background of Polemon’s treatise”, 227-80.

¹¹ The latter developed from the correspondence drawn between spiritual virtue and physical appearance in classical Arabic biographies. See Michael Cooperson, “Images without illustrations: the visual imagination in classical Arabic biography”, 7-20.

¹² For a broader discussion of the subject, see Oleg Grabar and Mika Natif, “The story of portraits of the Prophet Muhammad”, 19-37. For the verbal portraits of the Prophet or *hilya* and their artistic proliferation, see Nabil E. Safwat, *The art of the pen: calligraphy of the 14th to the 20th centuries*, 46-69. For a discussion of the correspondence between physical attributes and moral qualities in prophetic portraits, see David J. Roxburgh, “Concepts of the portrait in the Islamic lands, ca. 1300–1600”, 118–37.

discussed so far. While taking a rest from his trip towards Baghdad, the man is involuntarily witness to a couple of lovers in amorous attitude, although the unpleasant appearance of the male lover makes him believe that a violent act is in fact taking place. This is how he describes him:

In the dark, I saw a big negro with a diabolic and ugly face... He truly resembled Satan himself in all his turpitude. He was holding in his arms a moon-like beauty and was forcing his mouth on her lips. I was shocked by the ugliness of that demon (especially) when compared to the splendour of that young girl and was not able to control myself. I attacked the negro and took that beauty from his grip. The negro ran away, fearing my rage, but the girl grasped the neck and a corner of my shirt and tore it apart while screaming: "Why have you freed me from the arms of that idol that I have been so long looking for? Why are you depriving me of that joy, now?"¹³

The story ends with the admission by the man that his wrong reaction was caused by a superficial impression. Yet the story succeeds because a correlation is assumed between certain physical features and precise moral inclinations. To begin with, there is an overt association of Satan and demons with blackness and ugliness, considered to be their distinctive qualities. The tale then develops a further connection between this physical condition and evil. The black man—whose "blackness" reminds one of the Devil—is necessarily committing a wicked act because of his "dark-and-ugly" appearance. The simple fact that the man possesses these physical features is sufficient to lead the narrator to think that he could be committing an evil act. Furthermore, the victim is identified as "beautiful" and "white", two rather unimportant details that have no other purpose than that of vilifying their opposites further, and reinforce their association with wickedness.

This example offers a further indication of the kind of preconceptions and ideas characterizing the mental landscape that must have inspired artistic creativity too.¹⁴ As happened for the good characters, whose appearance was inspired by universally acknowledged criteria of beauty, the monstrous shape conferred on *divs* concretized well-rooted preju-

¹³ Sa'di, *Bustan*, ed. Nur-Allah Iranparast, 285-86. The translation is taken from an article by Mohammad Mokri focusing on the aesthetics of the human body in classical poetic sources ("Esthétique et lexique du corps humain dans la littérature classique [deuxième partie]", 245-356, 325).

¹⁴ A similar discourse about the ways in which the Islamic concept of beauty and the related aesthetic sensibility originate in metaphysical discussions is proposed by Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Topkapı scroll: geometry and ornament in Islamic architecture*, esp. chap. 10.

dices about hideousness and its broader ethical implications, making them the major evil characters in the poem. In order to explore this point further, in the second part of this chapter I will elaborate more on the moralizing nature of the *Shahnama*, focusing in particular on the ethical standards that *divs*' monstrous bodies appear to problematize and overturn, and finally comment on how their images contributed to the reception of the morals of the *Shahnama*.

In the *Shahnama*, *divs* occur in several different guises, an aspect that confirms their legendary mutable and deceptive nature.¹⁵ An instance occurs in the story of the minstrel-*div* at beginning of the reign of Kay Kavus, arguably the most capricious and inept ruler of the entire poem. Firdausi opens the narration of his kingdom with a thought-provoking premise that is worth quoting:

If a noble tree grows tall and is then damaged in some way, its leaves wither, its roots weaken, and its summit begins to droop; and if it snaps, it must give way to a new shoot that, when spring comes, will bud and blossom like a shining lamp. If a sickly branch grows from a good root, you should not curse the root for this. In the same way, when a father cedes his place to his son and acquaints him with the secrets of life, if the son then brings shame to his father's name and glory, then call him a stranger, not a son. If he slights his father's example, he deserves to suffer at the hands of fate. This is the way of the ancient world, and you cannot tell what will grow from a given root.¹⁶

In spite of the critical attitude shown by the poet towards Kay Kavus, the enormous space that he later concedes to the king leaves the reader puzzled. In the current edition of the *Shahnama* by Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh his reign occupies the entire second volume of the eight into which the text is divided. However, a more careful consideration of Firdausi's intentions reveals the relevance that mediocre examples of ethical conduct have in constructing the poem's idea of appropriate moral behaviour and rightful inclination.¹⁷ The wrongful acts and lunatic whims of Kay Kavus

¹⁵ The issue of *divs*' shifting appearance is discussed by Firuza Abdullaeva, "Divine, human, and demonic: iconographic flexibility in the context of a depiction of Rustam and Ashkabus", esp. 209-10.

¹⁶ Dick Davis, *Shahnameh: the Persian Book of Kings*, 142. For the Persian, see KM, II, 3, vs. 1-10.

¹⁷ Davis already noticed the predilection of the poet for inner struggles and spiritual contests, which have richer implications and didactic cues than external acts of virility and physical triumph (*The legend of Seyavash*, x-xiii).

are thus warnings about the dangers that a similar conduct could produce, shedding light on his posthumous repentance, but also on other characters' more noble attitudes.¹⁸ During his reign the foremost example of virtuous behaviour is, in fact, offered by Rustam, the main hero of the *Shahnama* and a close ally of the king.¹⁹

Rustam is the man who rescues Kavus from Mazandaran, where the White Div had him blinded and jailed in a cave. Similarly, he rushes to free the shah from the prison of the king of Hamavaran, where he had gone ignoring his wife's warning about the deceitful invitation of her resentful father. Rustam is again the one who sets out on the search for this same king when the latter's improvised flying machine tumbles miles away from the royal headquarters, almost killing him. Rustam's interventions appear as redemptive acts for Kay Kavus, who is only confronted with the shortcomings of his own defective temperament, but never faces the deep troubles and tragic losses to which other, more virtuous, characters are exposed.²⁰ At the same time, the paladin provides a constant example of virtue that inspires in the audience a stronger solidarity and sense of identification. The king he defends is, in fact, everything but a model of recommendable or inspiring conduct, something that makes of the hero the new point of reference for the reader of the *Shahnama*. This is probably also the reason why, from this point of the poem on, it is Rustam, a novel symbol of Good, who continues the physical struggle against the *divs*, the perennial emblem of Evil.²¹

The most famous episode of fight against demons is known as "Rustam's seventh *khan* (or *kh'an*): he kills the White Div", and features the

¹⁸ This aspect confirms even more the didactic intent of the poem, which, in my view, is intentionally strengthened by the author through the systematic juxtaposition of contradictory examples. Kay Kavus' disappointing experience is, in fact, followed by the even longer reign of Kay Khusrau, with whom a renewed faith in a just and virtuous ruler resurges in the poem.

¹⁹ Rustam's exemplary manliness as a source of victory over evil is discussed by Sebastiaan den Uijl, "The trickster "archetype" in the *Shahnama*", 71-90.

²⁰ Rustam himself faces many moral dilemmas and experiences many tragedies; the death of Suhrab and the killing of Isfandiyar are certainly the most notable ones.

²¹ While most of the remaining battles against *divs* occur under Rustam's long life, there is one last demonic challenge to which kings would be exposed, the one associated with Bahman castle. The story goes that when the time came for Kay Kavus to choose his successor between Fariburz, brother of the slain Siyavush, and Kay Khusrau, son of the latter, he decided to launch a competition and let destiny select the new ruler. He challenged the two princes to regain the castle of Bahman, which had been captured by a horde of *divs*. Kay Khusrau was able to succeed against the obscure usurpers precisely "by the power of the *far'r*", that is, the royal glory bestowed upon him by God.

last of a number of trials that the hero had to face in order to rescue Kay Kavus, trapped and blinded by the *div* in a cave of Mazandaran.²² Before commenting upon the story and its multiple pictorial adaptations, a very interesting, and hitherto unnoticed, aspect of the events leading to it deserves to be mentioned. During the captivity of Kay Kavus the text presents the White Div as an unexpectedly wise character. In an admonishing tone, the hideous leader even invites the shah to meditate on the implications of his condition:

Kavus you're like a willow, fruitless and afraid.
And you once thought your army could invade
Mazandaran, and that your strength is like
A maddened mammoth's when you chose to strike!
Since you have occupied the Persian throne,
Wisdom's deserted you, good sense has flown.
Here is the end of everything you sought,
Here is the punishment for which you fought!²³

The demon judges the imprisonment of the king as the price he has to pay for his arrogance.²⁴ Kavus quickly realizes it, when in the darkness of his prison he admits that his foolishness caused only him perils and losses, and that "a sensible advisor is more valuable than treasure".²⁵

A rare illustration of this interlude survives from an unfinished *Shahnama* made for Shah Isma'il II (r. 1576-78), which provides what I

²² While the shah did not engage in killing *divs*, his moral weakness made him an easy prey of demonic seductions, thus producing the circumstances for Rustam's intervention. Right at the beginning of his reign, a demon disguised as a minstrel visited the royal court, praising the ravishing beauties of Mazandaran, a land that had long been in the hands of the *divs*. Decided to reconquer it, Kavus set out for a new battle, which turned into a tragic defeat when he and other military chiefs were imprisoned and blinded by one of the most fearful Mazandarani leaders: the White Div (KM, II, 4-5, vs. 18-40; 15, vs. 196-201).

²³ Davis, *Shahnameh*, 149; emphasis added. For the Persian text, see KM, II, 16, vs. 207-11.

²⁴ The White Div instructs Arzhang, the commander of an army of demons, to reassure the king of Mazandaran that the plundering and destruction caused by the Persians would never occur again. He asks him to say that he has not killed their leaders "only so that they will know how pain differs from pleasure", thus implicitly insisting on the idea of the punishment for their wrongful acts (*ibid.*; for the Persian, see KM, II, 17, v. 219).

²⁵ KM, II, 16, v. 205. It is interesting to notice that the loss of sight, the sense traditionally symbolizing rationality and good judgment, occurs at the apex of Kavus' presumption, thereby emphasizing his total demise. At the same time, it is important to remark that its restoration requires a direct, physical engagement with the ultimate source of this condition, the *div*, who must not only be killed, but whose blood represents the only possible cure. From a cause of perdition, the *div* thus becomes an instrument of redemption.

believe to be an interesting visual adaptation of the *div*'s unusual wisdom (fig. 4, pl. 6). A blind and chained Kay Kavus sits inside a dark cave flanked by two members of his royal retinue. The cramped prison is located in a hostile landscape, haunted by fierce beasts peeping out from behind the rocks in seemingly aggressive attitudes. The White Div addresses the prisoners from outside the cavern, assisted by two more demons who appear to be engaged by his speech. In spite of the characteristic white fur, claws, and feline head with long horns—that is, all features that do not leave doubt about his demonic affiliation—the *div* is portrayed in a rather unconventional pose for a demon, which resembles that of a king sitting on his throne. Indeed, his stance visually echoes that of the actual king, Kavus, sitting a few steps away from him. The *div*'s composed gestures strengthen the correspondence further, effectively communicating the more meditative attitude that the text attributes to him in this specific instance. Nonetheless, he remains a horrid looking being. This is to say that his momentary wisdom does not suffice to erase the physical signs of his meanness. Differently, Kay Kavus' ill inclination remains virtually unexpressed in pictorial terms. Like all rulers, in fact, he is represented as a preciously dressed and moon-faced king.

This aspect raises the question of whether the role that Kavus holds justifies the use of the imagery traditionally used for (good) rulers. Formulating the question differently, was the king meant to be *seen* and understood as a symbol of authority regardless of his questionable actions? Respect of authority and obedience, we should not forget, are two dominant ideas in the *Shahnama*, even when rulers take controversial decisions or commit despicable acts. The literature focusing on notions of statecraft and kingship contemporary to Firdausi, but also following him, suggests a positive answer to this question.²⁶

Medieval Islamic political theory was the product of several different trends. It inherited the Sasanian notion of kingship as divinely sanctioned, and of the ruler as the shadow of God on earth. The idea of a universalistic Islamic empire and 'guardianship' of God's order was developed during the tenure of the 'Abbasid caliphate, although the Mongols later modified the notion of legitimate rule by submitting it to their traditions,

²⁶ A classical study on the matter remains Ann K. S. Lambton, "Justice in the medieval Persian theory of kingship", 91-119. More recent publications expanding Lambton's conclusion by focusing respectively on the interaction of political authority and Shi'ism, and the Turco-Mongol contribution to notions of rulership can be found in Said Amir Arjomand, *The shadow of God and the hidden Imam*, esp. 85-100, and Anne F. Broadbridge, *Kingship and ideology in the Islamic and Mongol worlds*.

genealogies, and the *yasa*, Mongol law.²⁷ At the same time, medieval mirrors for princes and works of practical advice and *adab* incorporated aspects of Greek philosophy as the idea of the philosopher-king, which would be developed by Sufi scholars and eventually dominate early modern notions of kingship.²⁸ As Lambton remarked at the end of her analysis, “ethics, not politics, provided in medieval, as in classical theory, the social ideal; and political thought was directed primarily towards the attainment of that ideal”. A just ruler was a primary condition for the prosperity of a country. But while justice entailed a number of personal virtues—having to do with the moral predisposition of the ruler, and either with religious knowledge or with wisdom that could or could not be found in a person—it could not be exercised without maintaining order. As stressed by Lambton,

the circumstances prevailing in the Islamic world were such that Islam appreciated order. This had two consequences. First it led the theorists in general to urge the need for a ruler’s power to be effective and the jurists in particular *to justify obedience to an unjust ruler*.²⁹

This idea is confirmed by the Ash’arite theologian Fakhr al-Din Razi (d. 1209) who, not long before the fall of the caliphate, declared that “an unrighteous ruler (was) preferable to the rule of a virtuous ruler if the interests of peace so demand(ed).”³⁰ This idea is among the reasons why in the medieval world political discourse remained extremely conservative, inspiring instead interesting meditations on ethics in the works of contemporary political thinkers. It is in the light of these ideas that seeing, conceiving, and portraying a ruler as a just ruler—an idea encapsulated in the expression *al-sultan al-‘adil*—by using an imagery conventionally

²⁷ According to Broadbridge, 7, 10, the successors of Chingiz Khan supported a nomadic ideology based on divine mandate and fortune, called *möngke tenggri*, “Enduring Sky”, and imperial fortune, *su*, which can be considered the Mongol equivalent of the Persian *bakht* and *farr*, the royal glory. A Chingizid ideology replaced the Islamic one, enforcing the ideological position of the Mamluks who instead continued to base their authority on purely Islamic ideas of kingship. Similarly, the notion of ‘lawgiver’ that would permeate the post-Ilkhanid Turco-Mongol world also originates in a nomadic concept of kingly power. Maybe in the similarity between *su* and *farr* lies the origin of the progressive assimilation by the Ilkhanids of Iranian notions of kingship, including its literary and artistic manifestations.

²⁸ Key figures in the transmission of this idea to Persian philosophy and political theory were Nasir al-Din Tusi (d. 1274) and Najm al-Din al-Razi (d. 1256); Lambton, “Justice in the medieval Persian theory of kingship”, 108–15.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 95; emphasis added.

³⁰ Quoted in *ibid.*

meant to represent this specific ideal should be understood. This is also a further proof of the inherently didactic value that the *Shahnama* possessed and of the conformity that illustrations observed in order to communicate the associated ideas. The pictorial language was tuned with the textual source to which it referred, reiterating in its own idiom a similar message, while drawing from the same pool of cultural ideas and associations.

Going back to Rustam's fight against the White Div, the episode is to my knowledge the most frequently illustrated legend of the *Shahnama*. The Shahnama Project Website—an online database which gathers illustrated *Shahnamas* from the principal public and private collections around the world—lists a total of 260 illustrations of the story (out of the some 500 manuscripts and fragments currently uploaded on the website) contained in manuscripts produced between the beginning of the 14th and the 19th century.³¹ The paintings developed in a large variety of versions.³² The subtle variations provided by such pictorial adaptations replicate, in Jerome Clinton's opinion, the production of "alternative performances" that the text of the *Shahnama* produced through time.³³ Like them, the existing versions are considered additional interpretations of an ever-changing narrative, a conclusion that assumes a close engagement of the painters with the text they were illustrating. Hence, the divergences that can be seen in the various illustrations of this tale—which tend to focus mainly on the final triumphant act, on the one hand, and on different stages of the fight, on the other—would be equally interpretable as continual visual commentaries on the text.³⁴ Clinton also notices that of the many "illustratable moments" offered by this tale, the actual climax—the one in which Rustam extracts the *div's* liver—is never represented. The general format and pictorial programme of manuscripts was certainly affected by the standardized mode of production in use in the workshop, a factor that could justify the widespread adoption of that

³¹ <http://shahnama.caret.cam.ac.uk/shahnama/faces/user/index>. Last accessed on 15 April 2010. The second most popular scene is Rustam shooting Isfandiyar (190 illustrations).

³² Such a broad variety of solutions can be viewed by accessing the Shahnama Project website and performing a search by episode or key terms.

³³ Jerome Clinton, "Ferdowsi and the illustration of the *Shahnameh*", 57-78.

³⁴ According to another study conducted by Clinton & Simpson, the tendency to depict alternative moments of the struggle is peculiar of the *Shahnamas* produced in the second half of the 16th century ("How Rustam killed the White Div: an interdisciplinary inquiry", 171-97, 187).

moment—and the associated format—as the main pictorial for the story of Rustam and the White Div. At the same time, I argue, the instant in which Rustam stabs the *div* more than any other phase of the fight, best conveys the idea of the triumph of Good over Evil, which is eventually the most important symbolic aspect of the whole story. Therefore, the naturalization of this image and its success as a pictorial subject has more to do with the ways illustrations were able to produce an emblematic formulation of the key message of the tale: the expected and necessary victory of the hero over the monster, that is of the virtuous character over the sinful one.

The enormous popularity of the episode of Rustam and the White Div also raises the question of why in a poem that is supposed to celebrate the kingdoms of illustrious past rulers, the tale that most struck people's imagination and that inspired the artists' creativity through the centuries is the legend of a 'fantastic' monster and a 'mythical' character with equally extraordinary powers (fig. 5). In my view a possible answer lies in the cathartic quality that the story of Rustam and the White Div possesses, a legend whose presence in oral tradition goes back many centu-



Figure 5. 'Rustam killing the White Div'. Ceramic tile panel Tehran, Gulistan Palace, 19th century (Photo: Author).

ries before Firdausi's written compilation.³⁵ Indeed, the struggle of the hero inspired a sense of identification in the audience both for the paladin's exposure to mysterious and yet attractive phenomena, and for his final triumph over a threat impending over mankind. In fact, the seventh and last trial of Rustam is required in order to restore authority by bringing Kavus back onto the throne of Iran. Likewise, the killing of the *div* is an inevitable act, for it is only through his liver's blood that the shah's sight can be restored. But Rustam's fight against the *div* can also be seen as symbolizing an inner and more problematic struggle, in which the hero is the embodiment of rationality and wisdom, and the demon of passions and instincts. Hence, his triumph over the monstrous creature stands as a victory over men's lower drives, and his killing as a way to purge the human soul of despicable aspects and inclinations that find no acceptance in a regulated society, the one presented and celebrated by the poem.

The *div*, like any other monstrous creation in different literatures and cultural traditions, provides the protagonists of the epic with a scapegoat, something to blame for their own failures and most perverted inclinations.³⁶ The poem explicitly defines human faults as the product of demonic seductions in order to minimize human responsibility. Kay Kavus' mistakes and caprices are constantly labeled as "Ahrimanic", that is, inspired by the devil. When Salm and Tur kill their brother Iraj, the demons of "wrath" and "greed" are held responsible for their irrational choice; in fact, the murderers are repeatedly labeled *divana*, *ahrimans*, or even *divs* in the text. Therefore, eliminating the *div* becomes an act of self-preservation—that is, an act through which recovering and safeguarding the 'good' part of the self—and a means to restore an equilibrium with the outside world and its rules, eradicating those aspects that cannot be reconciled with it.³⁷ In *divs*' hodge-podgy bodies we observe bodily dis-

³⁵ For the wall painting with the cycle of Rustam in Panjikent, see note 2. However, the Dunhuang Archive contains textual references to the stories of Rustam and the demons possibly pre-dating Firdausi's text too. The two fragments, discovered in 1913 during the third campaign of excavation of the Mangao Caves at Dunhuang (China, Gansu Province), are currently deposited in the British Library, London, with the accession no. Or. 8212/81.

³⁶ Talat Parman already advanced this reading in her article about the Siyah Qalam paintings that include *divs* ("The demon as a human double", 129-34).

³⁷ Interpreting the *div* as fulfilling a psychological, as well as anthropological, necessity enables us to understand the meaning that this entity—in both its narrative and painted form—possessed. The idea of the demon as embodying the 'dark' side of mankind can be better explained in relation to the notion of 'the double' coined by Otto Rank

proportion, exuberance, nakedness and hyper-sexuality, that is, all aspects that do not fit the parameters that dominate the depiction of the other figures, and that refer to aspects that have been regulated, normalized, as well as to tendencies and inclinations that have been progressively refused. The people looking at these paintings were, in most cases, the equivalent of the moon-faced and cypress-bodied kings in princely attire that the epic perpetually evokes, and whose ideal it was supposed to perpetuate. In their society—and in their status—there was not space for excesses of any sort, neither physical nor emotional or moral. It is then no surprise to see these same excesses manifested in the outcast *par excellence*, the demon. The epic poem thus offered an ideal tale to its audience, one that not only easily displayed on the body of the *div* those facets of human nature that societal existence did not allow, but that also required his final elimination by the hand of those who impersonated and defended the ‘civilized ideal’. Is not the ideal image projected by a ‘mythicized past’ one of the main reasons why the *Shahnama* continued to be reproduced and revitalized through the centuries?

In conclusion, loyalty, honesty, obedience, and moral uprightness appear as the principal qualities praised by the *Shahnama* and the virtues that made it into a timeless source of advice and moral exempla for rulers and princes. When images began accompanying the narrative, painters appear to have meditated on such ideas, trying to communicate them by resorting to aesthetic choices that could easily evoke related ideas and associations in their viewers’ minds. *Divs* were essential to the process because they became unequivocal embodiments of evil, meaningful counter-examples that valorized those impersonating the positive ones and that proved the value of civility and its ethical principles. Other men, even supposedly evil ones such as the Turanians, Iran’s arch enemies, are never shown to have this function in the poem, remaining, in fact, virtu-

and Sigmund Freud. According to them, at the beginning of their development men created a mental duplicate of themselves, which they used as a psychological artifice to preserve their ego. However, with the progress of humanity and men’s increasing ability to criticize and censor themselves, the double changed from a companion into an aberration. The shift in Freud’s opinion derives from mankind’s obsessive sense of guilt and their tendency to avoid taking responsibility for impulses and actions that clash against specific social and cultural constrictions. The double—which in the meanwhile has been made ugly in order to be distinguished from the ‘good’ part of human beings—thus becomes the ‘bad’ self onto which such responsibilities are transferred (Otto Rank, “Der Doppelgänger”, 97-164; Sigmund Freud, “The uncanny”, 235).

ally undistinguishable from their 'good' antagonists in visual terms. By being shaped according to a culturally specific notion of evil, images of *divs* thus reveal a unique kind of reception of the *Shahnama*. They did not inspire parallel texts, but tried to solidify the poem's broader cultural value by adding to its narrative an efficacious and thought-provoking visual interpretation.

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PART TWO

THE *SHAHNAMA* IN NEIGHBOURING LANDS

THE RECEPTION OF FIRDAUSI'S *SHAHNAMA* AMONG THE OTTOMANS

Jan Schmidt¹

INTRODUCTION

Firdausi's monumental *Shahnama* made quite an impact, to use an understatement, on the literatures of the Islamic Middle Ages and beyond. From the outset, Persian literature, and Firdausi's 'Book of Kings' in particular, in which Turanians, associated with ethnic Turks, figured prominently, stood central in the literary culture at the courts of Turkish princes. It was the ethnic Turkish Mahmud of Ghazna (reg. 388-421/998-1030), after all, to whom Firdausi presented his great work. Sultan Mahmud's lack of appreciation and Firdausi's dissatisfaction with his reward—according to one tradition Sultan Mahmud had promised one *dinar* for each verse, but gave only a *dirham*—became legendary. It was a Timurid prince, furthermore, a grandson of Timur, Baysunghur Mirza, who commissioned the production of what has been called the 'editio princeps' of the text in 829/1426.² This *Shahnama* tradition among ethnic Turks continued in Anatolia among the Saljuqs, the petty rulers of the *beyliks*, and, finally, the Ottomans. Ottoman pashas stole or bought copies of the work and Ottoman sultans had copies offered to them or confiscated from the libraries of their subjects and commissioned translations and imitations.³ In this paper, I intend to give a global idea of its impact on the Ottomans and Ottoman literature. This subject, as far as I know, has not been the object of systematic research so far and what follows is largely meant as a summary of the present state of knowledge on the topic.

¹ I wish to thank Hatice Aynur, Hedda Reindl-Kiel and Barbara Flemming for discussing the subject with me and helping me to find secondary literature.

² Alessio Bombaci, *La letteratura turca*, 131.

³ On manuscripts as objects enhancing the status of the Ottoman élite, see Lâle Uluç, *Turkman governors, Shiraz artisans and Ottoman collectors: Sixteenth century Shiraz manuscripts*, esp. 469 sqq.

MANUSCRIPTS OF THE *SHAHNAMA* IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

I will first present a brief inventory of the manuscript copies of the *Shahnama* or parts thereof that are preserved in libraries in Turkey and other successor states of the Ottoman Empire today.⁴ This might give the reader some indication of the presence and distribution of the text, perhaps even its popularity, in the region.⁵

By far the most voluminous collection of *Shahnama* manuscripts is found in the library of the Topkapı Saray in Istanbul.⁶ Like other Turkish princes before them, the Ottoman sultans (but also princes and princesses⁷) liked to own the work, and copies of the *Shahnama* belong to the most frequently mentioned items in book inventories preserved in the Topkapı Palace Archives.⁸ There are, in all, 53 copies of a full text, or at least a substantial part of it (the catalogue by Karatay published in 1961 is rather spare with details), and one undated fragment in a miscellany (no. 904.iii). One manuscript also contains a Quintet (*Khamsa*) of Nizami and a vocabulary, *Lughat-i Furs* (no. 348, dated 903/1498). The 53 manuscripts were copied, as far as this is indicated in colophons (twenty copies are undated), between 731/1331 and 1097/1686. Only in a few copies is there, apparently, an indication of where they were made: we find mention of Shiraz (no. 333, a copy dated 772/1379), Bukhara (no. 353, a copy dated 942/1535-36; and no. 361, dated 982/1574), Astarabad (no. 359, a copy dated 973/1565-66), at the Shaibanid (Uzbek) court in Transoxania (no. 538, a copy dated 972/1565)⁹ and Baghdad (no. 381, dated 1038/1629). Most

⁴ This inventory is, I am sure, far from complete; for what follows, I mainly relied on the collection of printed catalogues in the Leiden University Library. [For further details, and some variations in the figures quoted, see also the companion chapters by Zeren Tanındı and Lâle Uluç in this volume. Although there are several areas of overlap between them, the different approaches taken by the authors combine to provide a more rounded exploration of the subject (ed.)].

⁵ A remarkable number of educated Ottomans were able to read Persian and some of them were also able to write Persian prose and compose Persian verse; see Jan Schmidt, "The importance of Persian for Ottoman literary gentlemen: Two Turkish treatises on aspects of the language by Kemal Pashazade (d. 1534)", forthcoming.

⁶ Described in Fehmi Edhem Karatay, *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi Farsça Yazmalar Kataloğu*, nos. 332-384, 904.iii.

⁷ Cf. Uluç, *Turkman governors*, 475.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 471.

⁹ Karatay writes that the manuscript was originally made for the library of Abu'l-Ghazi Bahadur Khan, but this is impossible because that ruler died in 1074/1663; see also below.

copies, 45 in all,¹⁰ contain miniatures, varying in number between 12 and 128. No copy, apparently, was produced in the Ottoman Empire itself.

Apart from this rich collection, we find ten manuscripts in other libraries in Istanbul. Three are found in the Süleymaniye Library (Ayasofya 3861/1;¹¹ Beşir Ağa 486,¹² Ali Nihat Tarlan 380¹³); one in the Bayezid State (Devlet, formerly Umumi) Library (5705¹⁴); two in the Nuruosmaniye Library (3384, 3384 mükerrer¹⁵); and four in the University Library (FY 147, FY 1405, FY 1406, FY 1407¹⁶).¹⁷ Outside Istanbul, I could only locate three manuscripts. Two are kept in the Gedik Ahmed Paşa İl Halk Kütüphanesi in Afyonkarahisar (Gedik 17741, 17768),¹⁸ and one in the Ghazi Husrev Bey Library in Sarajevo (2917/3454).¹⁹ These manuscripts were copied, as far as that is indicated in colophons, between 834/1431 and 1088/1677. Only four of them contain miniatures, one of which, FY 1406 in the University Library, even as many as 109.

For the group of manuscripts that did not end up in the Topkapı Library, there is a little more information as regards provenance. The manuscript in the collection of Beşir Ağa, dated 843/1439-40, originally belonged to one of the two libraries founded by this Chief Black Eunuch (d. 1159/1746) in Istanbul.²⁰ Ali Nihat Tarlan (1898-1978) was a poet and scholar who translated literary works from Persian into modern Turkish, and also wrote extensively on Persian literature.²¹ The library in Afyonkarahisar probably—the introductory section in the Turkish catalogue is

¹⁰ Tanındı, this volume, n. 11, lists 55 illustrated copies [ed.].

¹¹ Described in Ahmed Ateş, *İstanbul Kütüphanelerinde Farşça Manzum Eserler*, I, 3.

¹² Described in Tawfiq H. Subhani, *Fihrist-i nuskhahā-yi khattī-yi Farisi-yi kitabkhānā-yi Turkiya*, 21 (the catalogue covers the holdings of 22 Turkish libraries).

¹³ Described in *The Union catalogue of manuscripts in Turkey, Süleymaniye, Ali Nihat Tarlan*, 155-56.

¹⁴ Subhani, *Fihrist*, 383.

¹⁵ Ateş, *Eserler*, 2-3, 5-6.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 4-5, 6-7.

¹⁷ The author omits the important collection in the Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi (TIEM), for which see the Shahnama Project website at <http://shahnama.caret.cam.ac.uk>, and the chapter by Zeren Tanındı below (p. 141) [ed.].

¹⁸ Subhani, *Fihrist*, 458-60; *The Union catalogue of manuscripts in Turkey, Afyon İli Yazmalar Kataloğu*, 515-16.

¹⁹ Fehim Nametak, *Catalogue of the Arabic, Turkish, Persian and Bosnian manuscripts*, IV, 233.

²⁰ For his biography, see Mehmed Süreyya, *Sicill-i osmani* (henceforth SO), 371; see also İsmail Erünsal, *Türk Kütüphaneleri Tarihi II. Kuruluştan Tanzimat'a Kadar Osmanlı Vakıf Kütüphaneleri*, 99: 130 of his most precious manuscripts were taken into the Palace Library, among them a *Shahnama*, cf. below.

²¹ For his biography, see *Türk Dili ve Edebiyatı Ansiklopedisi*, VIII, 273-75.

silent on this point—contains the manuscripts of the library which belonged to a *medrese*, founded by the governor of Anatolia and grand vizier, Gedik Ahmed Paşa (d. 887/1482), but nothing is known about the holdings of the original library.²² One of the *Shahnama* manuscripts kept there, Gedik 1145, was, according to one of the two catalogues describing the manuscript, copied in Buda in 956/1551.²³ The manuscript preserved in Sarajevo, finally, had formerly belonged, as the catalogue states, to the library of the Feyziye *medrese* founded by Elçi ('Ambassador') İbrahim Paşa in Travnik. The pasha, who died in 1120/1708, was sent as envoy to Vienna in 1111/1699–1700 and was later, among other things, governor of Rumelia.²⁴

It is too early to draw conclusions from these fragmented data, but I am sure that closer inspection of the manuscripts themselves may well reveal more indications as regards provenance, particularly because hardly any of the catalogues consulted go into details regarding ownership markings and other important clues of this kind. Further cataloguing may also bring more copies of our work to light. The impression one gets from the data so far, anyway, is that the book was not really a popular text. Perhaps only two copies were produced in the Empire itself, and all the others were imported from Iran and Central Asia. Most of the Ottoman copies, then, found their way to the Topkapı Palace either as a gift or booty, or as purchases from Iranian workshops.²⁵ Illustrated copies of the *Shahnama* were among the favourite presents offered by members of the secular élite such as viziers and *defterdars* to the sultan or his sons.²⁶ At the circumcision festival of 1582, the third vizier, Siyavuş Paşa, presented Sultan Murad III and his son, Prince Mehmed, each with an illustrated copy of the *Shahnama*.²⁷ At least two copies in the Topkapı collection formerly belonged to 'Koca' Sinan Paşa (d. 1004/1596), five times grand vizier and commander at the eastern front in 988–89/1581–82,²⁸ H. (Hazine) 1481 (no. 354, dated 950/1543, containing 37 miniatures)

²² Cf. Erünsal, *Türk Kütüphaneleri Tarihi*, II, 28; see also Hedda Reindl, *Männer um Bayezid. Eine prosopographische Studie über die Epoche Sultan Bayezids II. (1481–1512)*, 128.

²³ According to the Turkish catalogue; the Persian catalogue by Subhani, by contrast, positively states that no mention in the manuscript is made of a year of completion or the name of a copyist, let alone a place name.

²⁴ SO, 780–81; cf. A. Popovic, "Travnik".

²⁵ Uluç, *Turkman governors*, 477.

²⁶ See on this subject, Hedda Reindl-Kiel, "Power and submission gifting at royal circumcision festivals in the Ottoman Empire (16th–18th centuries)", 37–88.

²⁷ Uluç, *Turkman governors*, 500.

²⁸ SO, 1512.

and H. 1505 (no. 375, undated, with 16 miniatures). The manuscripts were probably acquired during his posting on the Persian border.²⁹ Whether they were gifts or confiscated upon his death—Sinan Paşa was executed—is not known.³⁰ Another copy belonged to his son, H. 1487 (no. 369, undated, with 22 miniatures).³¹ How the copy came into the possession of the Palace is unknown. Yet another copy belonged to a governor of Gence (Azerbaijan) and Shirvan, Davud Paşa (d. after 1004/1596), H. 1503 (no. 374, undated, containing 30 miniatures);³² he also may have acquired the manuscript on the eastern border and presented it as a gift to the court.

Luxurious copies of the *Shahnama* were exchanged as presents between princes. In 1514, the last Timurid ruler of Herat, Badi' al-Zaman, offered a copy of the *Shahnama* to Sultan Selim I after he had been captured in Tabriz.³³ About forty years later, the Safavid Shah Tahmasp's rebellious brother, Alqas Mirza, offered an illustrated copy of the work, acquired as booty, to the next Ottoman sultan, Süleyman.³⁴ The Shah himself offered a copy to the next Ottoman sultan, Selim II, as an accession present in 1568;³⁵ the manuscript, the famous 'Houghton *Shahnama*', which contained at least 258 magnificent miniatures, had disappeared from the Topkapı Palace Library by 1903.³⁶ On the occasion of the accession to the throne of the next sultan, Murad III, another *Shahnama* was brought to Istanbul by the Safavid ambassador, Toqmaq Khan. This was

²⁹ See Filiz Çağman & Zeren Tanındı, "Remarks on some manuscripts from the Topkapı Palace Treasury in the context of Ottoman Safavid relations", 132-48, endnote 2 (p. 145).

³⁰ Cf. Uluç, *Turkman governors*, 475.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 475-76.

³² Çağman & Tanındı, "Remarks", endnote 2 (p. 145); SO, 408.

³³ Uluç, *Turkman governors*, 490.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 490.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 481.

³⁶ In 1903 the manuscript was in the possession of Edmond de Rothschild and shown in an exhibition in Paris; in 1959 it was bought by Arthur Armory Houghton, president of the Corning Glass Works, from the Rothschild heirs for \$360,000; Houghton vandalized the manuscript by removing a part of the miniatures and giving them away—78 of them were donated in 1972 to the Metropolitan Museum of Art—or selling them; after Houghton's death in 1991, what remained of the manuscript, including 118 miniatures, was traded by the Houghton estate with the Iranian government in exchange for a painting of a female nude by Willem de Kooning, once owned by the Shah. For a detailed description of what happened, see Souren Melikian, 'Rare heirlooms of Iranian history', *International Herald Tribune*, 4 June 2005; see on the manuscript and its miniatures, Martin B. Dickson & Stuart C. Welch, *The Houghton Shahnama*.

in 1576.³⁷ Whether the manuscript is among those preserved in the Topkapı Library seems to be unknown. The aforementioned H. 1488 (no. 358), offered by the Shaibanid (Uzbek) ruler ‘Abd-Allah II to Sultan Murad III in 1594, is still in possession of the Topkapı Library.³⁸

Finally, *Shahnama* manuscripts reached the shelves of the Topkapı Palace Library by way of confiscation, among them from the libraries of Ali Paşa, an inhabitant of Buda (this happened in 996/1588); the governor of Rumelia, Mehmed Paşa, murdered by janissaries in 977/1589; and Damad İbrahim Paşa, executed in 1143/1730.³⁹ Another five had belonged to a pasha, not further specified, who lived in the 16th century.⁴⁰ Whether these manuscripts are still part of the Topkapı Library collection, is unknown. Of three confiscated *Shahnama* manuscripts that are preserved we know that they belonged to the grand vizier, İbrahim Paşa, who was executed in 1097/1686; the second vizier, Mustafa Paşa, son-in-law and companion of Sultan Mustafa IV (confiscated in the same year); and to the aforementioned Beşir Ağa. These were H. 1495 (no. 356, dated 1553, with 18 miniatures); H. 1484 (no. 367, undated, with 14 miniatures); and MS Revan 1548 (no. 363, dated 1586, with 29 miniatures).⁴¹ These data confirm that copies, especially illustrated copies of the ‘Book of Kings’, were above all appreciated as status-enhancing luxury objects.

This brings us to the question of what the sultans or members of his court did with these manuscripts, if anything at all. Whether the text was actually read by them, or perhaps recited to them, is unknown, and perhaps unlikely. An anonymous letter of advice preserved in the Leiden University Library, addressed, probably, to Sultan İbrahim (it is dated 1049/1639), urges the sultan to read, apart from dynastic chronicles, the *Shahnama* so that he can learn about the glorious past and its traditional ways (Cod. Or. 728, fol. 5v).⁴²

Apart from the Palace, copies of the work seem to have been collected by high-ranking state officials and scholars—the copies kept in the University Library in Istanbul may also have a scholarly background. That the book was not popular among a wider readership seems to be con-

³⁷ Uluç, *Turkman governors*, 481–82.

³⁸ Norah Titley, *Persian miniature painting and its influence on the art of Turkey and India*, 135.

³⁹ Uluç, *Turkman governors*, 472–73.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 473.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 476.

⁴² Jan Schmidt, *Catalogue of Turkish manuscripts in the Library of Leiden University and other collections in the Netherlands*, I, 227.

firmed by the fact that quotations from it are not found in Ottoman scrapbooks—at least I have not come across them so far—and that the book likewise seldom figures in the book inventories sometimes found in manuscripts. Only in one Leiden manuscript, Cod. Or. 80, which contains seven lists with book titles dating from, it seems, the early 17th century, is a copy of the *Shahnama* mentioned; it is priced at 2000 akçe (small silver coin). This was rather expensive if one compares it with salaries in the late 16th century, which ranged between a meagre 3 akçe for a day labourer, 15 akçe for a provincial mollah, to an extravagant 500 akçes per day for a court physician.⁴³

Despite the fact that the book seems to have been far less read than the *Divan* of Hafiz or Sa'di's *Gulistan*, and consequently far less mentioned in Ottoman book inventories and not at all in scrapbooks, the work was well known to Ottoman intellectuals. The scholar and *sheikulislam* (Shaikh al-Islam), Kemal Paşazade (d. 940/1534), quoted the *Shahnama* extensively in his treatises on the Persian language. The work was also used by Ottoman historians as a source for the pre-Islamic dynasties of Iran, for instance by Mustafa Âli (d. 1008/1600) in his *Künhü 'l-ahbâr*.⁴⁴ The work is discussed at length by the polyhistor and bibliographer, Kâtib Çelebi ('Hajji Khalifa', d. 1067/1657), in his *Kashf al-zunun*. Apart from data on the work and its writer, the scholar also mentions a number of translations and imitations, among them a translation into Arabic by al-Bundari al-Isfahani at the behest of the Ayyubid Sultan, 'Isa b. al-'Adil Abu Bakr, completed in 675/1276-77.⁴⁵ He also mentions Ottoman imitators like Firdevsi et-Tavil ("the Tall One"), who offered a *Shahnama*-like work to Sultan Bayezid [II]; Şühudi, who wrote a 4,000 distich-long imitation; Mahremi, of whose work Kâtib Çelebi had seen a fragment of 36 distichs—according to the bibliographer he died in 943/1536-37—and al-Arifi, who wrote a similar work for Sultan Selim I.⁴⁶ In what follows I will

⁴³ Jan Schmidt, *Pure water for thirsty Muslims. Mustafâ Âlî of Gallipoli's Künhü l-ahbâr*, 261.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 139-40.

⁴⁵ Cf. Cl. Huart, 'Firdawsi', in *EP*; F.I. Abdullaeva, "A Turkish prose version of Firdausi's *Shahnama* in the manuscript collection of the St. Petersburg State University Library", 50. The work seems actually to have been written between 615/1218 and 623/1227 and dedicated to the Damascus ruler al-Malik al-Mu'azzam 'Isa (d. 1227). [A Persian prose translation of Bundari's Arabic text was published in Iran in 2008 by 'A. Ayati, who gives the date of composition as 620-21/1223-24, p. ix (ed.).]

⁴⁶ *Kashf al-zunun*, ed. G. Flügel, with the Latin title *Lexicon Bibliographicum et Encyclopaedicum a Mustafâ ben Abdallah Katib Jelebi dicto*, IV, 12-14; in the Latin text, we find "Muharrami" instead of the correct "Mahremi", see also below.

come back to some of these authors. Curiously, the bibliographer was unaware of any Turkish translation of Firdausi's work.

TRANSLATIONS OF THE *SHAHNAMA* INTO OTTOMAN TURKISH

Perhaps the first translation of verses from the *Shahnama* into a Turkish that resembled the earliest Turkish of the Ottomans (mostly called 'old Anatolian Turkish') was made by Fahrüddin Ya'kub, who used the pen-name of Fahri. These verses, transposed into *hezec* (*hazaj*) rhyme, were inserted into various episodes of his translation of Nizami's *Khusrau va Shirin*. The poet-translator lived in Ayasuluk (modern Selçuk). His book was completed in 768/1367 and he offered it to the Prince İsa Beg of Aydın, a principality later incorporated in the Ottoman Empire. Only one manuscript copy of the work seems to have survived; it is preserved in the Berlin Staatsbibliothek and edited by Barbara Flemming.⁴⁷

A first, full translation, this time in prose, was produced in the first half of the next, 15th century, during the reign of Sultan Murad II. The author is unknown. Only parts have survived: a second volume of 328 folios, in a possibly 16th-century copy, is kept in the Topkapı Palace Library,⁴⁸ and a fragment of 52 folios in the Vienna Nationalbibliothek, purchased by Antonius Darduin in Istanbul in 1703.⁴⁹ The Topkapı copy contains nine miniatures. The Bibliothèque nationale in Paris, moreover, has another anonymous fragment of about 45 folios in prose and verse, entitled *Suhrabname*, part of a miscellaneous manuscript. It was dedicated to Prince Süleyman, son of Sultan Selim I (reg. 918-26/1512-20).⁵⁰

At about the same time, in Mamluk Cairo, a versified translation (again in the metre *hezec*) was made for the local ruler, Qansuh al-Ghauri (reg. 906-22/1501-16), who wished himself gloriously commemorated by it among future generations. The author calls himself Şerif (Sharif) in the

⁴⁷ Barbara Flemming, "Old Anatolian poetry in its relationship to the Persian tradition", 49-68, esp. 64-65. The edition is entitled *Fahris Husrev u Şirin. Eine türkische Dichtung von 1367* (Wiesbaden, 1974).

⁴⁸ Edhem Fehmi Karatay, *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi Türkçe Yazmalar Kataloğu*, II, 58 (no. 2154). There is another undated copy of a part of an anonymous translation in the same collection, *ibid.*, 57-58 (no. 2153).

⁴⁹ Gustav Flügel, *Die arabischen, persischen und türkischen Handschriften der k.-k. Hofbibliothek zu Wien*, I, 495-96 (no. 505).

⁵⁰ E. Blochet, *Bibliothèque Nationale. Catalogue des manuscrits turcs*, vol. II. V.L. Ménage, "Firdawsi", seems to suggest that it was somehow related to the anonymous translation of the period of Murad II.

prologue and epilogue accompanying the translation. It was completed, the author states, after ten years of hard work, in 916/1511. The presentation copy, apparently an autograph, contains 62 miniatures. It is preserved in the Topkapı Palace Library as H. 1519⁵¹ (and may have been taken there as war booty by Sultan Selim I after he had defeated—and killed—the ruler in the same year, 1516).⁵² Nothing is known of the author, apart from the fact that he calls himself also a Sayyid in the text. Curiously, the manuscript has a colophon which states that the text was completed by “its writer and versifier”, Hüseyin b. Hasan b. Mehmed el-Hüseyini al-Hanifi, as we can read in the facsimile edition by Anąniasz Zajaczkowski:⁵³ no mention there of either ‘Sayyid’ or ‘Sharif’. In the early 20th century, Brusali Mehmed Tahir alleged in his four-volume history of Ottoman literature that the translator/poet was also known as Şerifi-i Amidi—he is mentioned as such in the introduction to the translation of Eyyubi (cf. below) read by Tahir Bey—and therefore had his origin in Diyarbakır, and accompanied Prince Cem to the Mamluk court after the pretender had fled from Anatolia in 1481. He allegedly died in Cairo in 920/1514.⁵⁴ Barbara Flemming has suggested that the translator may well be identical with a ‘son of Persia’ and a *sharif*, called Sheik Hüseyin, who is mentioned as a translator of Persian correspondence at the court in Cairo in the chronicle of Ibn Iyas.⁵⁵ To make matters more puzzling, the French editor and translator of the *Shahnama*, Jules Mohl, mentions a manuscript copy of a translation in the possession of M. Jaubert, which was completed in 1516 also at the Mamluk court and dedicated to the same sultan, this time by a certain Tatar Ali Efendi.⁵⁶ Was it the same text? Was the effendi perhaps the copyist rather than the author of the text? We do not know. The colophon of one of the three other copies of the work preserved in the Topkapı Library, moreover, mentions a copyist with the name Hüseyin b. Hasan. Is this a coincidence? Or was he the same composer/copyist mentioned in the colophon of H. 1519? I do not know. He completed his copy

⁵¹ Karatay, *Türkçe Yazmalar*, II, 58-59 (no. 2155). See also the chapter by Tanındı in this volume [ed.].

⁵² Cf. Barbara Flemming, “Şerif, Sultan Ğavri und die “Perser””, 81-93, 90, who suggests that the manuscript was sent to Istanbul by Hadım Süleyman Paşa, governor of Egypt between 1524 and 1534.

⁵³ *Turecka Wersja Şah-name z Egiptu Mameluckiego*, 282.

⁵⁴ Brusali Mehmed Tahir, *Osmanlı Müellifleri* (henceforth OM), II, 256, 220; III, 9-10. See for Cem and his sojourn in Egypt, Walther Björkman, “Der Aufenthalt des Prinzen Cem in Ägypten 1481-1482 und seine politische Bedeutung”, 71-76.

⁵⁵ Flemming, “Şerif”, 85-87.

⁵⁶ Jules Mohl, *Le livre des Rois par Abou'l Kasim Firdousi*, I, 78.

in Istanbul in 951/1544. Of the two other copies of Şerif's translation in the Palace Library, one was completed in 952/1546 by another copyist, whereas the other misses a final leaf that may have contained a colophon. Both contain miniatures, 41 and 55 respectively.⁵⁷

Apart from the copies in the Topkapı Library, there are others. One is a lavishly illustrated copy, now in the Public Library in New York, made for the poet, grand-vizier and courtier—he was married to an Ottoman princess and a boon companion to Sultan Murad IV—Hafız Ahmed Paşa,⁵⁸ in 1026-30/1617-21. When it came on the market in the 19th century, the manuscript was purchased by Sultan Abdülaziz from the bookseller Hacci Ali Rıza. It was refurbished in 1290-91/1873-74, whereby 15 replacement miniatures were added to the original 108.⁵⁹ Another undated copy is in the British Library.⁶⁰ This London manuscript originally had 74 'half-page' miniatures, but these had been removed and replaced by coloured paper. Another copy, owned by the British orientalist, E.J.W. Gibb (1857-1901), probably now also in the British Library, is an illustrated copy of the first part of the work.⁶¹ The Nationalbibliothek in Vienna owns a second part dated 1078/1667.⁶² There are, finally, two copies in the St. Petersburg Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies. The first is a copy of the first part, with 33 miniatures,⁶³ which is dated 952/1545-46;⁶⁴ it was acquired in Cairo in 1776 by F. Arsenius Rehm. The second is a copy of a full version with two miniatures; it apparently is not (yet) described.⁶⁵ Whatever the origin of the translator, one can regard the work as belonging to Ottoman translated literature if only because of the language. Gibb had the impression that, "[Şerif] made his vocabulary as Turkish and his idiom as Turanian as the requirements of the case would allow",⁶⁶ but nonetheless

⁵⁷ Karatay, *Türkçe Yazmalar*, II, 59-60 (nos. 2156-8).

⁵⁸ SO, 556; E.J.W. Gibb, *A History of Ottoman Poetry* (henceforth HOP), III, 248-51.

⁵⁹ Barbara Schmitz, *Islamic manuscripts in the New York Public Library*, 254-65.

⁶⁰ Charles Rieu, *Catalogue of the Turkish manuscripts in the British Museum*, 152-53.

⁶¹ HOP, II, 392, fn.

⁶² Flügel, *Handschriften*, I, 495.

⁶³ W.D. Smirnow, *Manuscripts turcs de l'Institut des Langues Orientales*, 78-82. This copy seems at present to have the signature B 3690, cf. Abdullaeva, "Prose version", 55; this manuscript is more succinctly described in L.V. Dimitrieva, *Opisanie Tyurkskih Rukopisnykh Institutu Vostokovedeniya*, III, 69-70.

⁶⁴ Smirnow suggests that this was the year in which the work, rather than the copy, was completed; the three distichs which he quotes (p. 79) and which contain the aforementioned year were obviously copyist's verses and not the final couplets of the work itself.

⁶⁵ Cf. Abdullaeva; the shelf mark is E 8.

⁶⁶ HOP, II, 392.

the Turkish of the translation was more Ottoman than Qipchaq Turkish, which was the native language of the Egyptian ruling dynasty, or “Tatar”, which may have been the language of Tatar Ali Efendi (if he was not a mere copyist, that is).⁶⁷

During the reign of Sultan Süleyman, a poet “knowledgeable in history” called Eyyubi produced a prose translation of the *Shahnama*.⁶⁸ Not much is known of the translator—he is not mentioned in any Ottoman *tezkiye*—and the only source for his work is Brusalı Tahir Bey, who also says that he saw a copy of the second volume of the translation in the Millet Library in Istanbul. Lately, an (unfinished) thesis has been dedicated to the work.⁶⁹

The next translation, this time in prose with interpolated verses, was made by a certain Derviş Hasan, who used the pen-name of Medhi. He was attached to the courts of a number of Ottoman Sultans, from Murad III (reg. 982-1003/1574-95) to Osman II (1027-31/1618-22), and translated at least twelve Persian works on historical subjects and composed another four himself. The translation of the *Shahnama* was commissioned by Osman II, a weird autocrat who had ambitious plans for the Ottoman Empire (and, consequently, died a violent death). It covered about a third of the original. Three copies seem to have survived and are preserved in the Uppsala University Library,⁷⁰ the St. Petersburg State University Library⁷¹ and the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris.⁷² Both the Uppsala and the St. Petersburg manuscripts were produced by the court calligrapher İbrahim Cevri, who completed his work in, respectively, the middle of *Rebi’ülâhir* 1029/March 1620 and the middle of *Rebi’ülevvel* 1030/February 1621. Both manuscripts contain 29 miniatures. The Uppsala manuscript formerly belonged to the collection of the Swedish envoy to the Porte, Gustav Celsing (1723-89). The St. Petersburg manuscript was acquired around 1800 by the Russian traveller and orientalist, Prince Wenceslas Rzewuski, and via the Museum of the Society for History and Archaeology

⁶⁷ See on Turkish literature cultivated at the Mamluk court, Flemming, “Şerif”, 82; Mehmed Yalçın, *The Divan of Qansuh al-Ghuri*, 34-35, 42.

⁶⁸ OM, II, 9-10.

⁶⁹ Nurettin Özçelik, “Eyyûbî: Mensur Şehnâme tercümesi, 1-40 varaklar” (Yüksel Lisans Tezi, Marmara University, İstanbul), mentioned in Hatice Aynur, *Üniversitelerde Eski Türk Edebiyatı Çalışmaları. Tezler, Yayınlar, Haberler, Toplu Sayı 1990-2005*, 158.

⁷⁰ C.J. Tornberg, *Codices Arabici, Persici et Turcici Bibliothecae Regiae Universitatis Upsaliensis*, 93 (no. 148).

⁷¹ Smirnow, *Manuscripts turcs*, 82-87; Abdullaeva, “Prose version”.

⁷² Blochet, *Catalogue*, I, 314-15 (no. 326).

in Odessa, it somehow after 1897 (when it was seen by Smirnow in Odessa), found its way to St. Petersburg. The copyist of the Paris manuscript is unknown and the copy contains some 'mediocre' miniatures, a few of which have been cut from other manuscripts.⁷³

The University Library in Istanbul, finally, has an anonymous, partly dated—the year 1773 is mentioned in the first volume—illustrated prose version in three volumes.⁷⁴

Between 1281 (1864) and 1934, at least five translations of parts of, or selected texts from, the *Shahnama* were published in Istanbul and, once, Tiflis.⁷⁵ The one published in 1928, with the title '*Shahname*, the Oriental Iliad', was made for *lycée* pupils and contained summaries and "fragments in Turkish". To what extent it was used in schools, we do not know. A modern Turkish translation was made by N. Lûgal and K. Akyüz and published in three volumes in Istanbul 1945.⁷⁶

OTTOMAN IMITATIONS OF THE *SHAHNAMA*

The international prestige of the *Shahnama* not only inspired translations of the 'Book of Kings' but also gave rise to imitations in various forms. Irène Mélikoff pointed out that the work greatly influenced epic storytelling among the Islamic Turks during the first centuries, so much so that the Turanian hero Afrasiyab became some sort of national hero under the name of Alp Er Tonga.⁷⁷ Among the Ottomans, we find not so much popular epics that derived themes and motifs from the *Shahnama*, as a court-inspired cultivation of works that had the word '*Şehname*' or an equivalent of it in their title or were meant in some way or another to sing the praise of royal heroes. Such works were, in the beginning, Persian *masnavis* with the metre of the original, *mutaqarib*, but later they often were in Turkish, and even in prose. Most manuscripts thus produced were richly illustrated and destined for the private library of the sultans.

⁷³ Cf. the chapter by Tanındı in this volume; also the unpublished paper presented by Tülün Değirmenci at the Leiden *Shahnama* conference in January 2009, "An old text for a new context: A case study on Meddah Medhi's *Shahnama*" [ed.].

⁷⁴ MSS T 6131-3, cf. Serpil Bağcı, "From translated word to translated image: The illustrated *Şehnâme-i Türkî* Copies", 166, 175 (endnote 39).

⁷⁵ See M. Seyfettin Özege, *Eski Harflerle Basılmış Türkçe Eserler Kataloğu*, nos. 14898, 14899, 25472, 18610, 18697.

⁷⁶ Mentioned in Ménage, "Firdawsî".

⁷⁷ Irène Mélikoff, *Abu Muslim, le "porte-hache" du Khorassan dans la tradition épique turco-iranienne*, 29-30; see also Flemming, *Fahris Husrev u Şirin*, 146.

They were, as in the case of copies of the original *Shahnama* and its translations, luxurious objects rather than texts to be read. The content of these works was mostly panegyric description of the heroic deeds of the Ottoman sultans and had little to do with the original *Shahnama*.⁷⁸

An early *Şehname*-writer was Şehdi, probably identical with the “Şühudi” (Shuhudi) mentioned by Kâtib Çelebi,⁷⁹ who wrote such a work, duly in Persian and also known as *Hudavendname* (Per. *Khudavandnama*) for Mehmed the Conqueror (reg. 848-50/1444-46 and 855-86/1451-81). He seems to have died after he had completed 4,000 distichs. No manuscript of the work has so far been found.

Mahremi, also mentioned by Kâtib Çelebi, whose name was Ahmed and who probably died in 942/1535, wrote another, this time Turkish, *Şehname* for Süleyman the Magnificent (reg. 926-74/1520-66). He was born in Tatavla (part of Galata) and his father was a boon companion (*musahib*) of Sultan Bayezid II (reg. 886-918/1481-1512). Two manuscripts of the book, only recently identified, seem to have survived: an incomplete copy of the first part, which is kept in the library of the Turkish History Society (*Türk Tarih Kurumu*), and a copy of the second and third parts, kept in the Topkapı Palace Library (MS Revan Köskü 1287).⁸⁰ The text comprises 12,280 distichs, and describes the military exploits of Bayezid II, Selim I, and of the first two years of the reign of Süleyman.⁸¹

During the reign of Sultan Süleyman the status of such works increased to the point that their authors were bestowed the rank of “writer of *Shahnames*” or in Turkish: *şehnameci* (the more Persianate title *şehname-gu(y)* was also used) and received a regular salary for their exertions. The best-known incumbents of the post were Fethullah Arif (Arifi, d. 969/1562; his father was probably of Persian origin), mentioned by Kâtib Çelebi, Seyyid Lokman of Urmiya (d. 1010/1601-2), and Mehmed b. Mehmed el-Fenari (Ta’likizade, d. c. 1008/1600). They duly produced a series of books, of mixed content and literary quality, in Persian and Turkish, often lavishly illustrated and, not surprisingly, mostly kept in the Topkapı Palace

⁷⁸ Christine Woodhead, “Shahnamedji”.

⁷⁹ Cf. Franz Babinger, *Die Geschichtsschreiber der Osmanen und ihre Werke* (henceforth GOW), 27.

⁸⁰ Erroneously described in Karatay, *Türkçe Yazmaları*, I, 223 (no. 681).

⁸¹ GOW, 64; Hatice Aynur, “Mahremî”, in *Türk Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, XXVII, 390-91. An edition of the first part is found in: Hatice Aynur, “Mahremî ve Şehnâmesi, I. Yavuz Sultan Selim dönemi: inceleme-metin-sözlük-dizin”.

Library.⁸² Their prominence at court provoked the envy of contemporaries who fostered aspirations of a similar kind. The polyhistor and historian Mustafa Âli (d. 1008/1600), for instance, bitterly criticised them as worthless upstarts, “outsiders” from Persia, who were stark mad and hardly able to write a verse without making mistakes. Firdausi would have turned in his grave if he had been able to listen to the lamentable imitations of his great work! Especially the successor to Ta’likizade, a certain Nutki, bore the brunt of his anger. In the introduction to his famous world-history, *Künhü ’l-ahbar*, he called him “a Persian (or “dumb”) Turcoman”, “an ignominious character, a fake rope-dancer” and a worthless “story-teller”, unfit for the job of *şehnameguy*.⁸³

After about 1600 the post was abolished and afterwards *Shahname*-like works were commissioned only occasionally. The last sultans who ordered such books to be written were Osman II, already encountered, and Murad IV (reg. 1032-49/1623-40). The authors were Kemali (Kemalüddin Mehmed Taşköprüzade, d. 1030/1620)—no copy of his *Şehname* has so far been found⁸⁴—and İbrahim Mülhimi (d. 1061/1650). The latter wrote a rhymed *Şehinşahname* in Turkish, preceded by an introduction in Persian, which describes the exploits of Murad IV; it ends with the Baghdad campaign of 1048/1638. Only two copies have survived, one in the Topkapı Palace Library (MS Revan köşkü 1418),⁸⁵ and the other in the Leiden University Library (Or. 730, dated 1049/1640).

Apart from *Şehname*-writers, official or unofficial, there were also a few, in fact only two, Ottoman poets who adopted the pen-name of “Firdevsi”.⁸⁶ Apart from a Firdevsi of the Morea who ended his career as an obscure *kadi*,⁸⁷ there was Firdevsi of Bursa, nicknamed “Firdevsi-i Rumi” and “Firdevsi the Tall One”—we encountered him before as Firdevsi et-Tavil in Kâtib Çelebi’s bibliography—who is famous for an anecdote recounted in the *tezkiye* of Latifi and repeated by Kâtib Çelebi.

⁸² Perhaps most interesting, from a historical point of view, is Ta’likizade’s *Şehname-i hümayun*, essentially a history in ornate Turkish prose of the Ottoman military campaign to Hungary in 1593-94; it was edited and the contents summarized in English by Christine Woodhead (Berlin 1983). The unique manuscript was originally part of the Topkapı Palace Library collection, but later fell into private hands; at present it is preserved in the *Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi* in İstanbul, cf. Woodhead’s edn, 15.

⁸³ Jan Schmidt, *Mustafa Âli’s Künhü ’l-Ahbar and its Preface according to the Leiden manuscript*, 14, 61.

⁸⁴ GOW, 149.

⁸⁵ Karatay, *Türkçe Yazmaları*, I, 253-54 (no. 755).

⁸⁶ Cf. Ağah Sırrı Levend, *Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi I Giriş*, index.

⁸⁷ Kinalızade Hasan Çelebi, *Tezkiretü ’ş-şuarâ*, ed. İbrahim Kutluk, II, 745-46.

He was the author of a *Süleymanname*, an enormous encyclopaedic work in verse and prose on the prophets, in particular Solomon. Although he had wished to translate the *Shahnama* for Mehmed the Conqueror, the latter made it known to him that the work was well known and that, for a change, he should try his hand at a book on Solomon. Having worked for forty or fifty years on the project, he was able to complete 82 volumes (of the 366 that he had originally in mind).⁸⁸ A fair number of copies have survived, but no library seems to have a complete set, although a fairly good collection of fourteen volumes, among them two doublets, is preserved in the Topkapı Palace Library;⁸⁹ the Leiden Library possesses a copy of the second volume (Or. 17.130, dated 1155/1742).⁹⁰ The anecdote had it that when the author presented the Sultan, Bayezid II, with 360 volumes, the latter selected eighty volumes and had the others burnt, upon which "like the previous Firdewsi he said some unseemly couplets and went away to the country of Persia."⁹¹ His grave is also there."⁹²

CONCLUSION

Reviewing the data so far, we might conclude for the time being (but more research is clearly needed) that the *Shahnama* in the original and in translation was an important text, or at least an important artefact, at the Istanbul court and among the Ottoman secular élite until about 1600, and to a lesser extent in later times. Copies were acquired, received as presents or commissioned by sultans and pashas. The same was true for imitations of the work which eulogized the deeds of the sultans and which were often also entitled '*Shahnama*'. Scholars knew the work and quoted from it, but it seems doubtful that any of these works were actually read or recited by the élite. Codicological and bibliographical evidence seems to indicate that there did not exist a wider readership of the book and its imitations in the Empire. Some of the translations and imitations quickly

⁸⁸ Fahir İz, "Firdewsi".

⁸⁹ Karatay, *Türkçe Yazmaları* II, 290-92 (nos. 2780-94); most copies are undated, two were completed in 951/1544.

⁹⁰ Jan Schmidt, *Catalogue of Turkish manuscripts*, III, 554-56.

⁹¹ Cf. Djâlal Khaleghi-Motlagh, "Ferdowsi, Abu'l-Qâsem i", 522-23. According to one tradition, Firdausi fled to Herat and Tabaristan after he had, disappointingly, received only 20,000 dirhams from Sultan Mahmud; having got drunk in a bathhouse, Firdausi gave away the money to a beer seller and a bath attendant; in Tabaristan, he moreover wrote 100 lines satirizing Mahmud.

⁹² *Tezkire-i Latîfî*, 261.

lapsed into oblivion, disappeared wholly or partly from the shelves of the Palace library, and had—and perhaps will have—to be rediscovered by modern scholars; of other texts no manuscripts are known to have survived, and perhaps were never really produced at all. Some of these works were already obscure to Ottoman scholars of following generations. By the end of the 16th century, Mustafa Âli found it no longer necessary to mention Mahremi's *Şahname* by name, for instance, although he tells us that the poet “versified the holy wars” of the sultans Selim I and Süleyman,⁹³ and a few decades later Kâtib Çelebi, as we saw, was unaware even of the existence of the Turkish *Shahnama* translations.

Only in the 19th century did the work seem to a certain extent to have regained its place in the literary canon of Persian classics as far as Ottomans interested in literature were concerned. But the work never seems to have become popular, and, as we saw, it was only once translated in modern times. Yusuf Ziya Paşa (1825-80), in his famous anthology of Islamic literature entitled *Harabat*, quoted long sections from the *Shahnama*,⁹⁴ but, tellingly, did not mention the work in his rhymed preface. Here he informs us that he became entranced by literature when he was fifteen years old. Among his preferred lecture were the Persian classics:

They became teachers to my heart and soul/ The works of the eloquent
[poets] of Iran

and he mentions “Vehbi”, probably the author of the rhymed Persian-Turkish dictionary memorised by school children (*Tuhfe-Vehbi* of 1197/1783),⁹⁵ the Gulistan, Hafız and Nevayî (Nava’î), but no other Persian author.⁹⁶ A little later in the century, a certain Şakir Efendi (1829-1911) seems to have learned the work by heart and to have taught the text to students.⁹⁷ But in this he seems to have been unique. Reasons for this lack of resonance among the Ottomans may have had to do with the contents. Although Ottomans may with some effort of the imagination have identified themselves with at least a part of the story unfolding in the book, the *Shahnama* was essentially an epic about Persian history. Then there was the sheer volume. It was not easy to pick out an exciting

⁹³ Mustafa İsen, ed. *Künhü 'l-ahbâr'ın Tezkire Kısım*, 272; Kınalızade's *tezkire*, a source text for Mustafa Âli, still did mention it, cf. Kutluk's edition, II, 857.

⁹⁴ *Harabat*, III, 298-328.

⁹⁵ Cf. HOP, IV, 257-58.

⁹⁶ Ibid., I, *Mukaddime*, section *Sebeb-i tertib-i Harâbât*, no page numbers.

⁹⁷ İbnülemin Mahmud Kemal İnal, *Son Asır Türk Şairleri*, 1731-34.

passage or a memorable line from the overwhelming mass of materials. Finally, it must at all times have been difficult to get hold of the text, or parts thereof, either in the form of a manuscript copy or a printed book. The copies preserved in the Topkapı Palace and other private collections were inaccessible, and those for sale on the market, if available at all, must have been expensive. Firdausi simply could not beat Sa'di or Hafiz in the Ottoman Empire.

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THE ILLUSTRATION OF THE *SHAHNAMA* AND THE ART OF THE BOOK IN OTTOMAN TURKEY

Zeren Tanındı

The evidence of the illustrated and illuminated manuscripts shows that Firdausi's *Shahnama* became popular in the Ottoman court in the early 15th century. Firdausi's text was translated into Turkish prose for the Ottoman sultan Murad II (r. 1421-44; 1446-51).¹ A selected Persian text from Firdausi's *Shahnama* was also copied, and illuminated for Sultan Mehmed II (r. 1444-46; 1451-81), in the first half of the 15th century.² One of the historical sources mentioned that during the reign of Mehmed II, the court historian Şehdi composed an Ottoman history in the style of the *Shahnama* of Firdausi, but no work written by Şehdi is known today.³

Interest in Firdausi's work increased in the Ottoman court, as well as in Persia during the Timurid period in the early 15th century. Later during the Aq Qoyunlu Turkman period, richly illustrated, illuminated and expertly bound or unillustrated but richly illuminated and expertly bound *Shahnama* manuscripts were executed mainly in Shiraz.⁴

We know that wandering artists from the Timurid Herat and Aq Qoyunlu Turkman periods of Tabriz and Shiraz migrated to Bursa–Edirne and Istanbul. Scientists and poets also came to Amasya and Istanbul from the Timurid and Aq Qoyunlu lands beginning in the early 15th century. As a result, the artists carried their styles from one place to another, and the cultural dialogue increased.⁵

¹ The names of the Anatolian Saljuq rulers show that in the pre-Ottoman period there was a great interest in Firdausi's epic in Anatolia, but there are no illustrated copies of it: however, an illuminated copy is known from that time, see: A.M. Piemontese, "Nuova Luce su Firdawsi uno 'Shahname' Dato 614 H./1217 a Firenze", 1-38.

² Gotha Landesbibliothek, Abb.72a. *Orientalische Buchkunst in Gotha*, 131-32.

³ Casim Avcı, "Şehdi", 578. See also the chapter by Jan Schmidt in this volume [ed.].

⁴ For illustrated 15th-century *Shahnama* copies in the Topkapı Saray Library (hereafter TSMK), see below, n. 11. For other 15th-century copies, see Eleanor Sims, "The illustrated manuscripts of Firdausi's Shahname commissioned by princes of the house of Timur", 67-68. I may add to Sims' list Istanbul University Library's nos. F. 1313, F. 1406, F. 1407.

⁵ Thomas W. Lentz and Glenn D. Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision*, 313-19; Zeren Tanındı, "An illuminated manuscript of the wandering scholar", 647-55.

The manuscripts of the Aq Qoyunlu Turkmans, together with the bookbinders and calligraphers of Isfahan who produce them, reached the Ottoman court because Ugurlu Mehmed (d. 1477), the governor of Isfahan and the son of Uzun Hasan (r. 1466-78), sought refuge in Sultan Mehmed II's court in 1474.⁶ The manuscripts from this period, produced in Shiraz and Tabriz, are now housed in the Topkapı Saray Library (which contains 40 illustrated manuscripts executed during the Aq Qoyunlu Turkman period), the Süleymaniye Library and the Turkish and Islamic Art Museum in Istanbul.⁷ Some manuscripts bear the seals of the Aq Qoyunlu prince or ruler.⁸

An unillustrated copy of Firdausi's *Shahnama* was completed by 'Ali Bakir b. Sha'ban b. Haidar al-Isfahani, dated 19 Rabi' II, 861/16 March 1457 at Isfahan.⁹ Folio 3r of this work contains a seal of the Aq Qoyunlu ruler Sultan Hasan b. Osman. The illuminated medallion bears a dedication to a certain Sultan Mehmed (fol. 2r). Another *Shahnama* copied by Husain al-mashur bi Giluya and dated Jumada I, 895/March-April 1490 contains expertly executed miniatures from the Aq Qoyunlu Turkman period, and it also bears a seal on folio 2r that probably belonged to one of the Turkman rulers.¹⁰

Of the total of 55 illustrated *Shahnamas* in the Topkapı,¹¹ one was copied during the Qara Qoyunlu Turkman period,¹² and eight during the Aq Qoyunlu Turkman period in Shiraz (fig. 1, pl. 7).¹³ It has not been established that all of these manuscripts reached the Ottoman court by the end

⁶ Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, ceremonial, and power*, 14-15; Julian Raby and Zeren Tanındı, *Turkish bookbinding in the 15th century*, 69-79.

⁷ Illustrated Turkman manuscripts in the İstanbul libraries and in the other collections are listed in Filiz Çağman's unpublished Ph.D. dissertation. See, "Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Hazine 762 No.lu Nizami Hamsesi'nin Minyatürleri", 161-77.

⁸ Süleymaniye Library, no. Ayasofya 3133.

⁹ Süleymaniye Library, no. Ayasofya 3288.

¹⁰ İstanbul University Library, no. F. 1407. Calligrapher Husain Giluya copied one of the Topkapı's illustrated *Khamsas* of Nizami, dated 893-95/1488-89; no. H. 771. The expertly executed miniatures are in Aq Qoyunlu Turkman style; Fehmi E. Karatay, *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi Farsça Yazmalar Katalogu*, no. 415.

¹¹ Illustrated *Shahnamas* in the TSMK: 14th c.: H. 1479, H. 1511, H. 1510; 15th c.: H. 1496, H. 1515, H. 1489, H. 1506, H. 1491, R. 1542, H. 1478, H. 1507, H. 1508; 16th c.: H. 1499, H. 1509, H. 1480, H. 1504, H. 1494, H. 1485, H. 1481, H. 1656, H. 1482, H. 1516, R. 1543, H. 1495, H. 1484, H. 1500, H. 1477, H. 1497, H. 1475, R. 1548, H. 1476, H. 1501, H. 1488, R. 1546, R. 1549, H. 1493, R. 1544, H. 1505, H. 1490, H. 1512, H. 1492, H. 1502, H. 1503, H. 1513, H. 1514, H. 1487, H. 1486; 17th c.: H. 1498; 19th c.: A. 3065; Turkish translations: H. 1519, H. 1116, H. 1518, B. 284, H. 1520, H. 1522.

¹² H. 1496.

¹³ H. 1515, H. 1489, H. 1506, H. 1491, R. 1542, H. 1478, H. 1507, H. 1508.

of the 15th century. However, some samples of Turkman manuscripts must have reached the manuscript treasury of Mehmed II before 1481.¹⁴

Although it is not clear how it reached Istanbul, a *Shahnama* of Firdausi dated 899/1494, including more than 300 illustrations, was prepared for the treasury of Sultan 'Ali Mirza, as its illuminated medallion (*zahrīya*) indicates. The book is in two volumes located in two different libraries. The first volume, which is housed in the Turkish and Islamic Art Museum, came from the book treasury of the Mevlevi bureaucrat Halet Efendi (d. 1823), who established a library in the Galata Mevlevi order (fig. 2).¹⁵ The second volume is housed in the Istanbul University Manuscript Library.¹⁶ It was brought here from the Yıldız Saray Library, which was established by Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876-1909), after 1909. Many dispersed illustrations taken from both volumes, which were in the treasury of Topkapı Library before the 19th century, can now be found in various collections. This *Shahnama* has not been fully studied and no scholarly work has been published on it to date. The exquisite outer cover and doublure of the leather binding are in the late 15th-century Timurid Herat tradition rather than the Aq Qoyunlu Shiraz tradition, in which the miniatures are executed, by more than one artist; but the illuminations are in the Aq Qoyunlu Tabriz style.¹⁷

It is known that books were among the best gifts presented to the Ottoman Sultans and the Holy Qur'an and illustrated copies of Firdausi's *Shahnama* were the most favoured among them. When Sultan Selim I (r. 1512-20) conquered Tabriz in 1514, Badi' al-Zaman Mirza (d. 1517) the son of the last Timurid Sultan Husain Bayqara (r. 1470-1506) was taken by Shah Isma'il (r. 1502-24) from Herat. Badi' al-Zaman Mirza presented an illustrated *Shahnama* of Firdausi to Sultan Selim I as a gift, when he was

¹⁴ One of the 15th-century *Khamsas* of Nizami in the TSMK (R. 862), was copied in 844-47/1440-43 in Timurid Yazd or Shiraz and some of the illustrations were executed in this period, but the rest were added during the Qara Qoyunlu and Aq Qoyunlu Turkman period in Yazd or Shiraz. This manuscript bears the dedication to the Ottoman sultan Mehmed II. Ivan Stchoukine, "Un manuscrit illustré de la Bibliothèque de Mohammad II Fatih", 3-13.

¹⁵ No. 1978. Kemal Çiğ, "Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi'ndeki Minyatürlü Kitapların Kataloğu", 80-81; *Türk İslam Eserleri Müzesi [TIEM]*, 226-30. For the binding see Oktay Aslanapa, "The art of bookbinding", fig. 53; *TIEM*, 228. One of the illuminated frontispieces was lost (f. 1v), see the other (f. 2r): *TIEM*, 226. One was also removed, and is now in the Keir collection, see *The Keir Collection*, 159-62; Basil W. Robinson, "The Turkman school to 1503", pls. LXVIII-LXIX; *TIEM*, 227; *Palace of Gold and Light*, 75.

¹⁶ No. F. 1406. Fehmi E. Karatay & Ivan Stchoukine, *Les Manuscrits orientaux illustrés de la Bibliothèque de L'Université de Stamboul*, 52-54, pl. XVI.

¹⁷ Robinson, "The Turkman School to 1503", 243.



Figure 2. 'Enthronement scene'. Firdausi, *Shahnama*, Turkish and Islamic Art Museum, Istanbul, T. 1978, fol. 1v. Dated 899/1494 (Photo: *Türk ve İslam Eserleri*, 227).

first taken to the Sultan in Tabriz.¹⁸ We do not know which *Shahnama* it was, but it is clear that the book mentioned was not an ordinary work; it may have been the Sultan 'Ali Mirza's *Shahnama*.

The poet Malikzada Mahmud emigrated from Herat to work for the Ottoman prince Bayezid in Amasya and he later accompanied Bayezid to Istanbul. A draft of this poet's work, covering the events of the years 1481-90, named *Şehname-i Melik-i Ümmi*, was copied by Darvish Mahmud b. 'Abd-Allah Naqqash in the Ottoman court workshop and this copyist may have also have been responsible for the 20 miniatures that illustrated the

¹⁸ TSMK, H. 1597-98, f. 140r. Filiz Çağman, "The miniatures of Diwan-ı Hüseyini and the influence of their style", 241-42; S. Bağcı, F. Çağman, G. Renda and & Z. Tanındı, *Osmanlı Resim Sanatı*, 61-62, fig. 31.



Figure 3. 'Sultan Bayezid II and his viziers'. *Şehname-i Melik-i Ümmi*, Topkapı Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 1123, fol. 30v. Dateable c. 1495. (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Saray Museum, Istanbul).

manuscript.¹⁹ This book shows that the tradition of writing the history of the Ottoman Sultans in the style of Firdausi's *Shahnama* and calling it *Shahnama*, including preparing illustrations and transforming words to images, began in the Sultan Bayezid II period (r. 1481-1512).²⁰ (fig. 3).

¹⁹ TSMK, H. 1123; not mentioned in the Catalogue of Karatay. When I examined both manuscripts, I realized that the Süleymaniye copy (see next note) was the draft copy of H. 1123; Raby & Tanındı, *Turkish bookbinding in the 15th century*, 190; Bağcı et al., *Osmanlı Resim Sanatı*, 49-50; Ayşin Y. Yıldırım, "Following the path of a nakkash from the Akkoyunlu to the Ottoman court", 149-51.

²⁰ A draft copy is in the Süleymaniye Library, Fatih 4092, ff. 53r-140r. I would like to thank Prof. Mikail Bayram for drawing my attention to this manuscript.

We know that the epic of Garshasp, one of the heroes of the *Shahnama* of Firdausi, was very popular in elite circles. The first illustrated example of the *Garshasptnama* is in the Topkapı Saray Library, copied by al-Hajj Hasan Rukn al-Din in Rajab 755/July 1354, probably in Tabriz.²¹ One of the copies of this epic tale bears a dedication to Sultan Bayezid II. It was copied by Sultan Ahmad al-Haravi in 905/1499.²² There are no illustrations, but the *zahriya* and the *'unvan* pages were elegantly illuminated and expertly bound in the Ottoman style in the late 15th century (fig. 4, pl. 8).

THE FAMOUS EPIC OF FIRDAUSI TRANSLATED INTO TURKISH AND ILLUSTRATED

At the beginning of the 16th century, the Mamluk sultans and their governors developed a great interest in literary works written in Turkish outside the Ottoman élite circles. Even towards the end of the 14th century, Sultan Barquq (r. 1382-89; second r. 1390-99) requested Darir (d. 1400?), who was from Erzurum, to write a *Siyar* (Biography). Darir presented the *Siyar-i Nabi* that he wrote in Turkish to Sultan Barquq in 1388.²³ After Qansuh al-Ghauri became sultan (r. 1501-16) he requested Şerif (Sharif, d. 1514), a native of Amid-Diyarbakir, to translate the *Shahnama* from Persian into Turkish.²⁴ The first illustrated copy of this translation that was produced in the time of Qansuh al-Ghauri is now in the Topkapı Saray Library.²⁵ Şerif's preface, where he mentions his own name, was included in the first twelve pages of the book. In it he praises the Mamluk sultans and adds that Sultan Qansuh was a bibliophile, elaborating that the Sultan had requested him to translate the book for the benefit of all. The last eight pages, which were written in prose, mention Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna and narrate the life of Firdausi and the story of his writing the *Shahnama*. Şerif writes that he began translating the book

²¹ H. 674. Ernst J. Grube, *Persian painting in the fourteenth century*, 18-19, figs. 12-15; Filiz Çağman & Zeren Tanındı, *Topkapı Palace Museum Islamic miniature painting*, 14.

²² Süleymaniye Library, no. Ayasofya 3287.

²³ Zeren Tanındı, *Siyer-i Nebi. An illustrated cycle of the Life of Muhammed and its place in Islamic art*.

²⁴ Barbara Flemming, "Serif, Sultan Gavri und die Perser", 81-93; Flemming also published articles on the literary life of Qansuh al-Ghauri and Amir Yasbak, see "Literary activities in Mamluk halls and barracks", 249-60.

²⁵ H. 1519. Nurhan Atasoy, "1510 Tarihli Memluk Şehnamesinin Minyatürleri", 49-69; Zuhail Kültürel & Latif Beyreli, eds, *Şerifî Şehnâme Çevirisi*. Cf. the chapter by Schmidt in this volume [ed.].



Figure 5. 'Zal visiting Rudaba'. Turkish translation of *Shahnama* by Şerif (Sharif), Topkapı Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 1519, fol. 115r. Dated 916/1511 (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Saray Museum, Istanbul).

during the first year of the Sultan's sovereignty and that the work lasted ten years. The section written in verse by Şerif speaks highly of Qansuh al-Ghuri and describes the buildings that the Sultan founded in Cairo. The book was transformed into two separate volumes during modern repairs. The text of the first volume was completed in *mahrusa-i Misr* ('Cairo the protected') on the first night of Sha'ban 913/6 December 1507, by Husain b. Hasan b. Muhammad al-Husain in Qubbat al-Husniya, and the second part was finished on 2 Dhu'l-Hijja 916/2 March 1511 in the mosque of Sultan Mu'ayyad, during the reign of Sultan Qansuh al-Ghuri, in the city of Cairo and it was calligraphed by the translator Husain b. Hasan b. Muhammad al-Husaini 'al-Hanafi' (i.e. Şerif). The 62 illustrations of this work were completed in Cairo the same year. The artist had been deeply influenced by the Aq Qoyunlu Turkman style in the late 15th century (fig. 5). When Sultan Selim I conquered Egypt in 1517, this *Shahnama* must have been brought to Istanbul, along with other precious books.

THE ILLUSTRATION OF THE TURKISH TRANSLATION OF THE *SHAHNAMA*
IN THE OTTOMAN COURT WORKSHOPS²⁶

There are six illustrated Turkish translations of *Shahnama* of Firdausi in the Topkapı Library, three in prose and the other three in verse, including the Mamluk version described above.²⁷ Five of them were illustrated in the Ottoman court workshop.²⁸ Of the two other copies of Şerif's translation in verse form, one is dated Rabi' II, 951/July 1544,²⁹ and the other is dated 952/1545-46.³⁰ The first includes the complete *Shahnama* and its illustrations were probably completed c. 1560,³¹ whereas the other only includes the first section of the poem.³² Though they were illustrated by different artists, the subject matter of the illustrations of both copies is the same as the Mamluk sample. A prose translation of the *Shahnama* that was illustrated at the same time, around 1545, appears to have been painted by another artist as well. The text of this manuscript (H. 1116) includes the first section of the *Shahnama*.³³

The size of the two verse *Shahnamas* by Şerif (H. 1520, H. 1522) are approximately the same and although their bindings, illuminations and papers are not of a royal quality, their illustrations are. They may have been prepared as iconographic experiments, which would be used a few years later by a team of illustrators to prepare a *Shahnama* of the Ottoman sultan that was illustrated and written in Persian verse. The evidence appears to indicate that the head of the court workshop may have stipulated that the illustrators of the *Shahnamas* of the Ottoman sultan must have previously illustrated the *Shahnama* of Firdausi. The two later illustrated copies of Şerif's Turkish translation of Firdausi's *Shahnama* pre-

²⁶ Illustrated *Shahnamas* in the Topkapı Saray Library were first studied by Güner İnal in her thesis, "Topkapı Sarayı Müzesindeki Şehnâme Yazmalarının Minyatürleri Üzerinde Analitik Çalışma". For illustrated Turkish translations, see Güner İnal, "The Ottoman interpretation of Firdausi's Shahname", 554-62; Serpil Bağcı, "From translated word to translated image: The illustrated Şehnâme-i Türki copies", 162-76; idem, "An Iranian epic and an Ottoman painter Nakkaş Osman's "new" visual interpretation of the Şâhnâmah", 421-50; Bağcı et al., *Osmanlı Resim Sanatı*, 94-96.

²⁷ Verse: TSMK, H. 1519, H. 1520, H. 1522; Karatay, *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi Türkçe Yazmalar Kataloğu*, nos. 2155, 2156, 2158. Prose: TSMK, H. 1116, H. 1518, B. 284; *ibid.*, nos. 2153, 2154. B. 284 was not mentioned in the catalogue.

²⁸ TSMK, H. 1520, H. 1522, H. 1116, H. 1518, B. 284.

²⁹ H. 1522.

³⁰ H. 1520.

³¹ H. 1522. Bağcı et al., *Osmanlı Resim Sanatı*, 114-15, see fig. 77.

³² H. 1520. Bağcı et al., *Osmanlı*, 94-95.

³³ H. 1116. Bağcı et al., *Osmanlı*, 96.

served elsewhere, one from the end of the 16th century³⁴ and the other from the early 17th century,³⁵ also appear to support this claim.

It appears that Ottoman historians during the reign of Sultan Süleyman (r. 1520-66) had been substantially influenced by Şerif's Turkish translation. One example is Eyyubi, who wrote the history of Sultan Süleyman in verse, and translated the entirety of Firdausi's *Shahnama* into Turkish, but Eyyubi's work is unknown to us.³⁶ Celalzade Mustafa Çelebi tried to translate the *Shahnama* into Turkish but he was unable to do so.

The year 1547 was arguably very significant for understanding the rise of illustrated Ottoman history written in the style of Firdausi's *Shahnama*. This year, Alqas Mirza (Elkas Mirza, d. 1548), governor of Shirvan and a Safavid prince, sought refuge with the Ottomans when he fell out with his brother Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524-76). He came to Istanbul together with Aflatun Shirvani (d. 1569), who was his librarian, as well as an illuminator, illustrator and calligrapher.³⁷

From 1530 to 1545, the court workshop of Shah Tahmasp reproduced many illustrated books; the *Shahnama* of Firdausi was most in demand. One copy dated 1522-35, measuring 47 x 32 cm, had more than 250 illustrations. It was originally produced with jewelled binding, but the present binding is not original.³⁸ Another important book from the court workshop was an album designed for prince Bahram Mirza (d. 1549) in 1544-45.³⁹ The album is 49 x 35 cm and the book includes samples of exquisite calligraphy, illuminations and illustrations. Most of these illustrations and calligraphies were also signed. The third masterpiece of the Tabriz workshop is a Qur'an that was copied by the famous calligrapher Shah Mahmud Nishaburi in Muharram 945/May 1538.⁴⁰ However, the superb illuminations were completed by Hasan al-Baghdadi in 970/1562, and the present binding is not original.⁴¹ Alqas Mirza came from such an artistic

³⁴ The British Library, Or. 7204. Norah Titley, *Miniatures from Turkish manuscripts*, no. 58.

³⁵ New York Public Library, no. T.1. Barbara Schmitz, *Islamic manuscripts in the New York Public Library*, 254-65.

³⁶ Cf. Jan Schmidt's chapter in this volume [ed.].

³⁷ TSKM, H. 1517, f. 471v. Esin Atıl, *Süleymanname*, 195. Zeren Tanındı, "Safavid princes and envoys in the Ottoman court", 236-37; Bağcı *et al.*, *Osmanlı*, 100, fig. 63.

³⁸ Martin B. Dickson & Stuart C. Welch, *Houghton Shahnameh*.

³⁹ TSKM, H. 2154. David Roxburgh, *The Persian album 1400-1600*, 245-307.

⁴⁰ TSKM, H.S. 25. Priscilla Soucek, "Calligraphy in the Safavid period", 60-61.

⁴¹ This Qur'an has an illuminated medallion bearing a dedication to *kitabkhana-yi padishah Abu'l-Ghazi Sultan Muhammad Bahadur Khan*. The manuscript needs a full study from the codicological point of view.

environment. It is also significant that he brought his master librarian Aflatun Shirvani together with him to Istanbul. We know that Alqas Mirza was an intimate friend of the bibliophile vizier Rustem Paşa in Istanbul.⁴²

THE ILLUSTRATION OF THE WORK OF THE ŞEHNAMECIS

The poet Fethullah Arif Çelebi (Arifi, d. after 1562) who knew Persian very well, was assigned to the service of Alqas Mirza as a chancellor by the court administration. We do not know what kind of artistic relations existed between Alqas Mirza, Aflatun Shirvani and the poet Arifi, but we do know that Arifi was appointed as the first official *şehnameci* (Ottoman court historiographer) a few years later, around 1550.⁴³ He was assigned to compose a Persian verse history of the Ottoman dynasty in the style of *Shahnama* of Firdausi, and a private workshop with illustrators and scribes were assigned to Arifi's service. The book, called *Shahnama-yi Âl-i Osman*, was finished in 1558 and was made up of five volumes.⁴⁴ The calligraphers were masters of the nasta'liq script and came from Shiraz, Shirvan and Herat. Those in charge of the illustrative production had previously illustrated the Turkish translation of the *Shahnama* of Firdausi. Two miniatures show how the illustrators of Arifi's work followed the iconographic programme of the illustrated *Shahnama* of Firdausi. One miniature is in the fourth volume of *Shahnama-yi Âl-i Osman*, which was called *Osmanname*,⁴⁵ illustrating the siege of Aydos castle.⁴⁶ During the siege of this castle, the daughter of the Byzantine castle commander helped one of the Ottoman soldiers, Gazi Rahman, whom she had seen in her dream. She threw a rope from the castle and Gazi Rahman climbed the wall, to open the castle door for the Ottoman soldiers.⁴⁷ This is the scene depicted in the miniature; the painter follows the iconographic programme of the Ottoman illustrated copies of Şerif's *Şehname-i Türki*,⁴⁸

⁴² Tanındı, "Safavid princes and envoys", 237.

⁴³ Christine Woodhead, "An experiment in official historiography", 159-61.

⁴⁴ Esin Atıl, *Süleymanname*.

⁴⁵ Formerly in the Kraus Collection; see Ernst J. Grube, *Islamic paintings from the 11th to the 18th centuries in the Collection of Hans P. Kraus*, 216-40.

⁴⁶ Grube, *Islamic paintings*, pl. XLIV; Bağcı et al., *Osmanlı Resim Sanatı*, fig. 60.

⁴⁷ This love story was narrated in Ottoman historian Aşıkpaşazade's work. See: K. Yavuz & M.A.Y. Saraç, ed. *Âşıkpaşazade*, 356-59.

⁴⁸ TSMK, H. 1520, f. 48v, H. 1522, f. 57v: See Bağcı, "An Iranian epic and an Ottoman painter", fig. 11; Bağcı et al., *Osmanlı Resim Sanatı*, fig. 56.

rather than the Mamluk copy.⁴⁹ The second miniature is in the fifth volume of Arifi's work, named *Süleymanname*, which illustrates the dying Hüseyin Paşa in the arms of a fellow commander (fig. 6).⁵⁰ The composition recalls the representation of the death of Dara in the lap of Iskandar.

It appears that Arifi's short collaboration with Alqas Mirza and Aflatun Shirvani produced a turning point in the art of the book in the Ottoman court. As we will see, when Arifi died, Aflatun Shirvani was assigned to the post of court *şehnameci*.

In 1567, Shah Tahmasp sent Shah Kulu from the Ustajlu Turkmans as an ambassador to the Ottoman court to celebrate the enthronement of Sultan Selim II (r. 1566-74). The reception ceremony was held in Edirne, and Shah Kulu was attended by 720 people, who required the use of 1,700 pack animals to reach the city. There were numerous gifts from Shah Tahmasp,⁵¹ including the outstanding manuscript of Firdausi's *Shahnama* with a bejewelled binding and 259 illustrations, referred to above.⁵² Nearly a year later, that unique work was added to the manuscript treasury of the Ottoman Court. The new official *şehnameci*, Seyyid Lokman Aşuri from Urmiya, was appointed in 1569.⁵³ He composed several illustrated history books in verse, in Persian and written in nasta'liq script, which were copied by calligraphers from Shiraz and Qazvin, until he was released from his duties around 1595. The author mentions Firdausi several times, comparing himself with Firdausi and the Ottoman sultans with the heroes of Firdausi's work.⁵⁴

In the late 16th century the Ottoman bureaucrat Asafî Dal Mehmed Çelebi (d. c. 1604) wrote a history in verse entitled *Şeja'atname* (*Shaja'atnama*). The manuscript addresses the Ottoman-Safavid war that he

⁴⁹ TSMK, H. 1519, f. 115r. See Atasoy, "1510 Tarihli Memlûk", fig. 5.

⁵⁰ TSMK, H. 1517, f. 235r. See Esin Atıl, *Süleymanname*, 138.

⁵¹ This ceremony was mentioned in the historical sources in detail: İsmail H. Danişmend, *İzahlı Osmanlı Tarihi Kronolojisi*, 375-76; Zeren Tanındı, "Safavid princes", 237-38.

⁵² This manuscript, the so called Houghton *Shahnama*, was first mentioned in the chronicle by a royal bureaucrat Ahmed Feridun, *Nushat-ı Asrâr al-ahbâr dar-safar-ı Sigat-var*: "*Şah Tahmasb'un kendi adına denilmiş ikiyüzellidokuz yerde tasvir meclis olunmuş musavver cildli bir kut'a şahname*" (TSMK, H. 1339, dated 13 Rajab/1 January 1569 in Çorlu, ff. 246v-247r); see also Dickson and Welch, *Houghton Shahnameh*.

⁵³ Bekir Kütükoğlu, "Şehnameci Lokman", 7-15.

⁵⁴ Serpil Bağcı, "Visualizing power: Portrayals of the Sultans in illustrated histories of the Ottoman dynasty", 118-19.



Figure 6. 'Death of Hüseyin Paşa'. *Süleymanname*, Topkapı Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 1517, fol. 235r. Dated 965/1558 (Photo: courtesy of the Topkapı Saray Museum, Istanbul).

witnessed between 1578-85.⁵⁵ The text of the manuscript was copied on 15 Shawwal 994/29 September 1586 in Kostantiniye, but the preface was completed in 995/1587. Although the manuscript was dedicated to Sultan Murad III (r. 1574-95), it was composed like a heroic poem or *Zafarnama* to Commander Özdemiroğlu Osman Paşa (d. 1585). Asafi also described his years of being enslaved in Qazvin, and how he met the Safavid Shah Muhammad Khudabanda (r. 1578-87) and his son Hamza Mirza (d. 1586). The manuscript depicts portraits of the Safavid royal family, Safavid bureaucrats and images of Crimean Khans.⁵⁶ Asafi compares himself with Firdausi and his epic in the manuscript's preface, and he adds that if he had written his book in greater detail, it would have been two *Shahnamas* (of Firdausi).⁵⁷ Asafi refers to the Ottoman commanders or warriors with the names of Firdausi's heroes: Darab, Dara, Afrasiyab, Giv, Harrad, Hurmuzd, Iskandar, Kai Kavus, Manuchihr, Nushirvan, Sam, Suhrab, Rustam-i Zal are some examples. He includes stories inspired by Firdausi's *Shahnama* or by the Turkish poet Tacaddin Ahmedi's (d. 1412-13) epic on Iskandar and Dara; one of the stories was illustrated in the chronicle of Asafi's *Şeja'atname*.⁵⁸

After Seyyid Lokman, Ta'likizade (d. c. 1599) was appointed as *şehnameci* around 1590, and the *Şehnâmes* began to be composed either in Turkish verse or prose, written in naskh script.⁵⁹ Sometime after his appointment, Ta'likizade produced his first work entitled *Şema'ılname-i Âl-i Osman*, which is undated. The work has ten illustrations, two of them on facing pages.⁶⁰ At the beginning of the text, Ta'likizade mentions the previous kingship and Firdausi as well as his heroes Kayumars, Jamshid

⁵⁵ İstanbul University Library, T. 6043. See full bibliography and latest publications in Bağcı et al., *Osmanlı Resim Sanatı*, 169-71. One M.A. thesis on the miniatures (Gönül Kaya, "Resimli Bir Osmanlı Tarihi") and one Ph.D. dissertation on the text critical edition (Süleyman Eroğlu, "Âsafi'nin Şecâatnâme'si") were prepared on this manuscript. The full text and miniatures are published in Âsafi Dal Mehmed Çelebi, *Şecâ'atnâme*.

⁵⁶ Bağcı et al., *Osmanlı Resim*, fig. 138. Safavid bureaucrats are depicted not only in the *Şeja'atname* but in the other two illustrated chronicles related to the Ottoman-Safavid wars of 1578-90, *ibid.*, 164-73; Tanındı, "Safavid princes", 236-41. One of them is very important for Safavid history, showing the assassination of Begum Khair al-Nisa, queen of Shah Muhammad Khudabanda, and Adil Girai, a brother of the khan of the Crimea. See for the manuscript, *Nusratnama*, TSMK, H. 1365, f. 229r.

⁵⁷ T. 6043, ff. 2r-2v; Eroğlu, "Asafi'nin Şecâatnâme'si", 167-68.

⁵⁸ Eroğlu, "Asafi'nin Şecâatnâme'si", 133-34. Güner İnal, "The influence of the Kazvin style on the Ottoman miniature paintings", 461, fig. 3.

⁵⁹ Christine Woodhead, "From scribe to litterateur: The career of a sixteenth-century Ottoman kâtib", 54-72.

⁶⁰ TSMK, A. 3592. For its contents see Christine Woodhead, *Ta'likî-Zâde's Şehnâme-i hümâyûn*, 12. For the miniatures see Bağcı et al., *Osmanlı Resim Sanatı*, 177-79.

and Darab and between the verses there is an illustration showing Kayumars enthroned (fig. 7, pl. 9). Although Ta'likizade did not write about Kayumars in detail, the Ottoman illustrator must have known the illustrative programme or iconography of this enthronement scene and depicted it in the traditional way.

The Ottoman court *şehnameci*s Seyyid Lokman and Ta'likizade added a preface and epilogue to their *Shahnamas*, describing themselves and their work and mentioning their collaborating painter. The preface includes miniatures representing the *şehnameci*, the painter and calligrapher, or a single portrait of the *şehnameci* in the epilogue, as in Ta'likizade's works.⁶¹ Firdausi's text includes similar lines and miniatures in the preface.⁶²

A poet and a *meddah* (storyteller) Medhi (Madhi, d. after 1620) translated the text of Firdausi into Turkish prose on the request of the *darüssaade agha* (black eunuch) Mustafa, during the reign of Sultan Osman II (r. 1617-22).⁶³ In the preface of this *Shahnama* he gives information about himself and explains why he translated the book and who requested the translation. The painter (Nakşi) inserted the portrait of poet Medhi, Sultan Osman II and Mustafa *agha* in the preface.⁶⁴ What differentiates Medhi's translation from Şerif's is the fact that while translating the work of Firdausi, Medhi expanded and altered the text by connecting the heroes of the *Shahnama* with Osman II.⁶⁵

Mehmed b. Abdülğani (Gani-zade) who wrote under the pseudonym of Nadiri (d. 1626), came from an educated family. He began working as a *müderres*, and later as a *kadı asker*, and *şeyhülislam*. His close connections

⁶¹ Zeren Tanındı, *Siyer-i Nebi*, min. XIII; Bağcı *et al.*, *Osmanlı Resim Sanatı*, fig. 148.

⁶² Tanındı, "Sultanlar, Şairler ve İmgeler", 267-96.

⁶³ There are three illustrated copies of this translation: 1) Uppsala University Library, no. Celsing 1 (first part), see Esin Atıl, "An eclectic painter of the early 17th century", 106, figs. 11-14; 2) St. Petersburg State University Library, Or. 1378 (second part), see Furuza Abdullaeva, "A Turkish prose version of Firdawsî's Shah-nama", 50-57; 3) Paris Bibliothèque Nationale, Turc. 326 (first part), see Ivan Stchoukine, *La Peinture Turque* II, nos. 49-50, pls. XXXII, XLV. Medhi's translation and illustrated copies of his work were fully studied by Tülün Değirmenci's Ph.D. dissertation: "Resmedilen Siyaset: II. Osman Devri (1618-1622) Resimli Elyazmalarında Değişen İktidar Sembolleri", Ankara, Hacettepe University, 2007. Cf. Schmidt's chapter in this volume [ed.].

⁶⁴ This group portrait is in the Paris manuscript of Medhi (Turc 326, f. 3v), see Ivan Stchoukine, *La Peinture Turque* II, pl. XXXII. They were identified by Tülün Değirmenci, see her dissertation, pp. 134-35.

⁶⁵ Tülün Değirmenci, "'Legitimising' a young sultan: Illustrated copies of Medhi's Şehnâme-i Türki in European collections", 164-68.

to court circles are evident from the poems he wrote to Ottoman sultans and palace officials.⁶⁶ One copy of his *Divan* was richly illustrated in his lifetime.⁶⁷ Another of his works in verse, named *Shahnama-yi Nadiri*, narrates the events of the Osman II period. This work was illustrated around the year 1622.⁶⁸ He wrote in the style of Firdausi's epic and praises Firdausi in the last lines of his book as well.⁶⁹ Nadiri uses the names of Firdausi's heroes to praise people in this work. Although Nadiri was not an official *Shahnama* writer of the court, his work is the last illustrated history of the Ottoman sultans, written in the style of Firdausi's epic.⁷⁰

During the 19th century the Western artistic style was very popular in the Ottoman Court. Sultan Abdülaziz (r. 1861-76) himself was a painter and he had an extensive collection of paintings by Western artists.⁷¹ An early 17th-century illustrated copy of Şerif's Turkish translation of *Shahnama* of Firdausi was refurbished for Sultan Abdülaziz in 1873-74. The 15 replacement illustrations included in this text mark the end of the Ottoman book illustration tradition.⁷² We know that the Sultan's mother Pertevniyal Valide Sultan (d. 1883) endowed a collection of precious manuscripts to the library next to the mosque that she founded in Istanbul Aksaray in 1871. This collection is now divided between the Süleymaniye Library and the Turkish and Islamic Art Museum;⁷³ the latter contains an elegantly illustrated copy of Firdausi's *Shahnama* from Pertevniyal's collection, which was copied by Muhammad katib al-Shirazi in 956/1549 and illuminated by Husain b. Muhammad in Shiraz.⁷⁴ One of the illustrations represents the birth of Rustam. On the lower right side, there is an inscription (*necâbetlû sultan Abdülaziz Efendi hazretlerindir*), which

⁶⁶ Numan Külekçi, *Gâni-zâde Nadirî ve Dîvânından Seçmeler*.

⁶⁷ TSMK, H. 889. Zeren Tanındı, "Transformation of words to images: Portraits of Ottoman courtiers in the Dîwâns of Bâkî and Nâdirî", 136-45.

⁶⁸ TSMK, H. 1124. See full bibliography and latest publications in Bağcı *et al.*, *Osmanlı Resim Sanatı*, 213-17. Değirmenci, "Resmedilen Siyaset: II. Osman Devri (1618-1622)", 167-222.

⁶⁹ Numan Külekçi, "Gâni-zâde Nâdirî. Hayatı, Edebi Kişiliği, Eserleri, Dîvânı ve Şeh-nâmesinin Tenkitli Metni", Ph.D. dissertation, Erzurum Atatürk University, 1985, 303-422.

⁷⁰ Cf. Christine Woodhead, "Reading Ottoman *Şehnâmes*: Official historiography in the late sixteenth century", 80 [ed.].

⁷¹ Semra Germaner & Zeynep İnankur, *Oryantalistlerin İstanbulu*, 117-18.

⁷² New York Public Library, no. T.1. Schmitz, *Islamic manuscripts in the New York Public Library*, 254-65.

⁷³ Nimet Bayraktar, "İstanbul'da Kadınlar Tarafından Kurulmuş Kütüphaneler", 182.

⁷⁴ No. 1984. Çığ, "Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi'ndeki Minyatürlü Kitapların Kataloğu", 82-84, pl. XIV.

means that “this manuscript belongs to Sultan Abdülaziz” (fig. 8, pl. 10). Sultan Abdülaziz was interested in the Western painting style, but these samples indicate that he was interested in the classical literary works as well and liked to have illustrated copies of them.

The keen interest of the Ottoman courtiers in the *Shahnama* of Firdausi led to the collection of rich samples of illustrated copies in the manuscript treasury. This interest also led to the production of a series of illustrated histories of the Ottoman Sultans in prose and verse, which became the masterpieces of Ottoman illustrated manuscripts and thus enriched the art of the book in Ottoman Turkey.

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THE *SHAHNAMA* OF FIRDAUSI IN THE LANDS OF RUM

Lâle Uluç

Unlike the rose, which must soon wither and die,
A book once written should be a thing of beauty for all time.

Ta'likizade, *Eğri Fethi Tarihi*.¹

This chapter discusses the contribution of the *Shahnama* of Firdausi to Ottoman discourse, focusing on its reception, propagation and perception in the *diyar-i Rum* or the lands of Rum.²

The Ottoman dynastic *şehnâmes*, most of which date from the second half of the 16th century, closely correspond to the image invoked by the fourth Ottoman *şehnâmecî* (official court chronicler/*şehnâme* writer) Ta'likizade (d. c. 1599). They are precious items of 'beauty', produced at the Ottoman court *nakkâşhane* (the imperial atelier), by master calligraphers, illustrators, illuminators and bookbinders.

¹ Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Museum Library (TSMK), H. 1609, f. 7v; cited and translated by Christine Woodhead, *Ta'likizâde's Şehnâme-i Hümayûn*, 4.

² The editors of the 24th volume of *Muqarnas*, dedicated to the papers presented at the symposium on the architectural heritage of the lands of Rum held in 2006 at Harvard University, state that they chose the term the "Lands of Rum" as opposed to "Ottoman Empire" or "Turkey" because the symposium was planned to question precisely the dynastic or nationalistic categories that these titles evoked. Sibel Bozdoğan & Gülru Necipoğlu, eds, *History and ideology: Architectural heritage of the "Lands of Rum"*, 2. I had independently chosen the title for my essay, for similar reasons. Cemal Kafadar's erudite discussion of the term "*diyâr-ı Rûm*" and the *nisba* "Rûmî" from the same volume, "A Rome of one's own", 7-25, clarifies the significance of these terms. Using selected sources from the 13th century onwards, Kafadar states that the term "*diyâr-ı Rûm* for defining a cultural as well as a physical space (the lands of Rome, limited over time to the eastern Roman lands, i.e., Byzantium) was adopted from earlier Arabo-Persian usage" to be "stretched by Turkish speakers to refer to the zone that they inhabited and in large part also governed." The term *diyar-i Rum*, however, was not part of the official language of the Ottoman documents to refer to the Ottoman lands. The term "Rumi," referring to a person from the geographical region of Rum, was a category shaped by the civil society (p. 5). Its usage in the biographical dictionaries of poets (or literati) implied that "Rum was a cultural space inhabited by a community that shared a literary language, Turkish" (p. 9). For earlier discussions of the Rumi identity, see, among others, Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and intellectual in the Ottoman Empire*, 253-72; Salih Özbaran, *Bir Osmanlı Kimliği*; Tülay Artan, "Questions of Ottoman identity and architectural history", 85-109.

The Ottoman *şehnâme*s are almost all preserved in unique copies in the imperial treasury, unlike their 11th-century Persian namesake, the *Shahname* of Firdausi, which was produced continuously for centuries under subsequent dynasties in the pre-modern region of Greater Iran (comprising parts of Transoxiana, Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq). It was never prepared as an illustrated copy in its original Persian in the Ottoman court, nor indeed in the lands of Rum. It was, however, translated into Turkish several times.

The *Şehname-i Türki*, in other words the *Shahname* of Firdausi in Turkish, needs to be evaluated within the context of the general translation movement that had started in Anatolia after the collapse of the Rum Saljuqs. From the 14th century onwards, all kinds of works previously produced in the Islamic world, from medical to literary, began to be translated.³ This continued through the 15th and 16th centuries, as many of the important Persian works were translated on imperial orders.⁴ In addition, Ottoman poets' works were often based on translations of earlier works with the same names. For example the *Khusrau and Shirin* of Şeyhi (d. 834/1431), who is the best-known poet of the Çelebi Mehmed (1413-21) and Murad II (1421-51) periods, is a translation of Nizami's *Masnavi* with the same name. Şeyhi dedicated his work to Murad II, in whose reign many other such works were produced. Over twenty, which were mostly translated from Persian originals, survive with dedications to the same sultan.⁵ In the 16th century, even the Saljuq *Şehname* of Dehhani, which had been written in Anatolia but in Persian, was translated into Turkish.⁶

Four versions of the *Şehname-i Türki*, translated on separate occasions, have extant illustrated copies.⁷ Three of the illustrated versions were written in prose; two upon the orders of Ottoman sultans in Istanbul. The first Istanbul translation was done for Murad II around 1450-51. All of its illustrated copies, however, stylistically appear to be from the second half of the 16th century.⁸ The second Istanbul translation was done in the 17th

³ Gönül Tekin, "Turkish literature: Thirteenth to fifteenth centuries", 502.

⁴ Günay Kut, "The Classical period in Turkish literature", 527.

⁵ Tekin, "Turkish literature: Thirteenth to fifteenth centuries", 510 and 512.

⁶ By a poet called Şikari, who lived among the Karaman, see Fuad Köprülü, "Anadolu Selçukluları Tarihi'nin yerli Kaynakları", 399-401.

⁷ Serpil Bağcı, "From translated word to translated image", 165-72; *idem*, "An Iranian epic and an Ottoman painter", 421-50.

⁸ TSMK, H. 1116, H. 1518, B. 284. Bağcı, "From translated word to translated image", 165, nn. 24 and 25; Serpil Bağcı, Filiz Çağman, Günsel Renda & Zeren Tanındı, *Osmanlı Resim Sanatı*, 94-96 and 112-115, pls. 55-57 and 76-77.

century for Sultan Osman II (1618-22), and its illustrated copies were also produced during this period. Neither the patron nor the date of the third one is known.

The single versified version of the *Şehname-i Türki* is by Sharif Amidi (Şerif, d. 920/1514) and it has many illustrated copies. Şerif was one of the poets gathered around Cem Sultan b. Mehmed II (1459-95), but he ended up offering his work to the Mamluk Sultan Qansuh al-Ghauri, after Cem Sultan went in exile to Europe.⁹ The first illustrated copy of his work was produced under his own supervision in 1511 in Mamluk Cairo. It was then brought to Istanbul, probably as booty after Selim I (1512-20) defeated the Mamluks in 1516, and became a prototype for 16th-century Ottoman copies, which repeat its cycle of paintings.¹⁰

The Ottoman imperial treasury must also have had a large collection of luxury copies of the *Shahnama* of Firdausi illustrated in the Greater Iran region under various dynasties. Today, around 50 still remain at the Topkapı Palace Museum Library (henceforth TSMK), while others from the Imperial Treasury have been deposited in the collections of two other institutions in Istanbul founded after 1928, during the Turkish republican period, namely, the Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum and the Istanbul University Library.

The *Shahnama* of Firdausi was found in multiple copies in some of the private Ottoman libraries as well, although it was not the only Persian book that the Ottomans collected in multiple copies. Just like the Imperial Treasury, which had many copies of all the popular Persian classics, private libraries also contained multiple versions of the same work. An interesting 16th-century inventory consisting exclusively of books belonging to an anonymous owner lists 210 books, one third of which are in Persian. There are seven copies of the works of Sa'di, eight of Hafiz, thirteen of Nizami, nine of Jami, four of 'Attar, two of Tabari, and five copies of the *Shahnama* of Firdausi. Many of the Persian works are noted as illustrated (*musavver*).¹¹

The *Shahnama* of Firdausi must have been among the most sought after books among the Ottoman collectors. Its popularity is indicated by

⁹ Tekin, "Turkish literature", 519.

¹⁰ Nurhan Atasoy, "1510 Tarihli Memluk Şehnâmesinin Minyatürleri", 151-58; Bağcı, "From translated word to translated image", 165-66; Tekin, "Turkish literature", 519. Cf. Tanındı's chapter in this volume [ed.].

¹¹ Istanbul, Topkapı Palace Museum Archives, D. 9710, see Lâle Uluç, "Ottoman book collectors and illustrated sixteenth century Shiraz manuscripts", 85-107; idem, *Turkman governors, Shiraz artists and Ottoman collectors*, 471-78.

archival documents, which list it directly after the copies of the Qur'an that are always at the top of the lists. It was among the most valued Safavid diplomatic gifts and was even exchanged as a prestigious gift among the Ottoman élite. For example, we know that during the circumcision festival of the crown prince of Murad III, Şehzade Mehmed, in 1582, the third vizier, Siyavuş Paşa, presented the sultan and the prince each with an illustrated copy of the *Shahnama* of Firdausi.¹²

The only known illustrated Ottoman copy of the *Shahnama* of Firdausi in Persian is among the holdings of the TSMK (H. 1486), and was probably also intended as a gift. It was produced in the Ottoman provincial centre Baghdad, and can be dated to the last decade of the 16th century.¹³ It carries an oval seal dated 1023 (1614) bearing the name Mahmud, which may have belonged to Mahmud Paşa, who is attested to have been the Ottoman governor of Baghdad in 1608 and 1615.¹⁴ Thus, he might have acquired the manuscript there, possibly to present it at the court in Istanbul.

Baghdad had become part of the Ottoman Empire in 1534 during the first eastern campaign of Sultan Süleyman. It was not part of the *Diyyar-i Rum*, however, since, once again, the term was applied to eastern Roman lands. Although one would enter the lands of Rum travelling westward from Iran or northward from Syria or Iraq, its vague eastern boundary did not encompass Baghdad.¹⁵ The poet Fuzuli (d. 1556), who completed his *mesnevi Leyla and Mecnun* in 1535-36 at Baghdad, about a year after the Ottoman sultan Süleyman conquered the city, dedicated his work, which he composed in Turkish, to the Ottoman governor of Baghdad. Fuzuli, for example, expressed in his works that he felt out of touch with the patronage networks of the *diyyar-i Rum*. A second contemporary writer, the Ottoman captain Seydi Ali Reis, who refers to himself as *Katib-i Rumi* in the introduction of his work, *Mir'atu'l-memalik*, likewise writes that although he felt safe when he reached Ottoman Baghdad, he soon left it to head towards the *diyyar-i Rum*.¹⁶

¹² Orhan Şaik Gökyay, "Bir Saltanat Düğünü," 31-39; Uluç, *Turkman governors*, 471-78.

¹³ There are a number of illustrated manuscripts produced there for the Ottoman ruling élite from the last years of the century and this copy of the *Shahnama* is among those. See Filiz Çağman, "XVI Yüzyıl Sonlarında Mevlevi Dergahlarında Gelişen Bir Minyatür Okulu", 651-77; Rachel Milstein, *Miniature painting in Ottoman Baghdad*, pl. IV; Bağcı et al., *Osmanlı Resim Sanatı*, 246-57, pl. 212; Nurhan Atasoy & Filiz Çağman, *Turkish miniature painting*, 60, pl. 36.

¹⁴ Bağcı et al., *Osmanlı Resim Sanatı*, 255-56.

¹⁵ Kafadar, "A Rome of one's own", 17

¹⁶ Both cited by *ibid.*, 17.



Figure 1. Binding. Firdausi, *Shahnama*, c. 1590-1600. Topkapı Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 1486.

Although the Topkapı *Shahnama* (H. 1486) is stylistically attributed to Baghdad and to the period when the city was part of the Ottoman lands, its illustrations are more closely related to those from Safavid manuscripts than Ottoman. Its contemporary binding in black leather, with a central *shamsa* and four corner pieces, has stamped floral decorations in the Ottoman *saz* style (fig. 1).¹⁷ Its frontispiece represents Solomon and

¹⁷ This does not necessarily mean that it was an Ottoman binding, however, since during the reign of Shah 'Abbas I (1587-1629), Ottoman *saz* style, and especially the large, dagger like *saz* leaves, were used in Safavid arts as well. Similar leaves are seen on the binding of a copy of the *Qiran al-Sa'dain* of Amir Khusrau Dihlavi from the Lisbon Calouste Gulbenkian Museum (LA 187), which carries a seal indicating that it was among the manuscripts endowed to the Ardabil shrine of Shaikh Safi in 1608 by Shah 'Abbas I, see *The art of the book from East to West and memories of the Ottoman world*, 148-49, cat. no. 30. Another possibly Safavid binding decorated with *saz* leaves is found in the Paris

Bilqis enthroned in separate thrones but on the same page, and Solomon's vizier Asaf, who is seated facing the royal couple on the opposite page (figs. 2-3). The frontispieces of Shiraz luxury manuscripts of especially the second half of the 16th century often represent the same theme, though they always depict Solomon with his vizier Asaf on one page, while Bilqis and her court are represented on the opposite page.¹⁸

The Baghdad manuscript has illustrations for some of the more popular *Shahnama* episodes, and the common enthronement scenes. An interesting connection with a Shiraz copy of the *Shahnama* exists in the scene that depicts Kai Kavus's attempt to ascend to the sky in his flying machine (fol. 71r, fig. 4, pl. 11). Kai Kavus is seated in his throne with four eagles tied to each of its corners, and points his bow heavenward. The sky is filled with four angels. A group of astonished horsemen and inhabitants of the settlement below are the spectators of the scene. Earlier Shiraz representations of this scene, such as the one from a Shiraz *Shahnama* dated 928/1522 (TSMK, H. 1485, fol. 85v; fig. 5, pl. 12),¹⁹ do not have angels, nor do they have architectural representations, even when a crowd of standing spectators is present.

The large fish carried by one of the angels in the Baghdad *Shahnama* is a further unusual detail, since there is no mention of it in the text.²⁰ This image, however, is not the only one that includes an angel with a fish: three other copies of the *Shahnama* of Firdausi from the TSMK, all later than 1590, also have an angel holding a fish in the illustration depicting the same scene.²¹ The first, dated 1000 (1591-92), can stylistically be attrib-

Musée des Arts Décoratifs (UCAD 20073), see *Istanbul, Isfahan, Delhi: 3 capitals of Islamic art*, 170-71, cat. no. 63. An ink drawing from a Safavid album at the TSMK depicting a youth gazing at an Ottoman style *saz* drawing that he is holding in his hand also shows the interest of the Safavid world in this dynamic style, see Banu Mahir, "Osmanlı Sanatında Saz Üslubundan Anlaşılan", fig. 8.

¹⁸ Serpil Bağcı, "A new theme of the Shirazi frontispiece miniatures: The *Divan* of Solomon", 101-11; Uluç, *Turkman governors*, 33-39 and figs. 136, 137, 175, 227, 228, 229, 240, 338.

¹⁹ Uluç, *Turkman governors*, 105-35; idem, "A group of artists associated with the 'Asi-tana' of Husam al-Din Ibrahim," 113-47.

²⁰ It appears to have been transferred from the account of Nimrud's attempt to fly, see, Eleanor Sims, "The illustrations of Baghdad 282 in the Topkapı Sarayı Library in Istanbul", fig. 2; cf. Firuza Abdullaeva, "Kingly flight: Nimrūd, Kay Kāvūs, Alexander, or why the angel has the fish".

²¹ There are other copies of the *Shahnama* with the illustration of the same subject that include the angel with the fish. For three of these images (London, BL, Add. 27,302, f. 12v, dated 994/1586; New York, MET, inv. no. 13.228.17, f. 12v, dated 1079/1669; and Tajikistan, Firdausi Library, inv. no. 1677, f. 12v, undated), see the *Shahnama* Project website at <http://shahnama.caret.cam.ac.uk>. For a fourth (Paris, BNF, Supp. pers. 490, f. 62v),

uted to Shiraz (H. 1476, fol. 161v).²² The second, although undated and hard to attribute to a specific centre, can be dated to the early 1590s because of its Ottoman flyleaf notes (H. 1503, fol. 92r). The last has two colophons dating it to the years 1037-38/1628-29 and specifying that it too was completed at Baghdad, which was under Safavid control during these years (H. 1498, fol. 101v).²³

An Ottoman connection becomes somewhat more apparent in the latter part of the manuscript. The most striking parallel is the design of the *kaftan* fabrics, with their magnified patterns that create an immediate visual impact reflecting the Ottoman court taste of the period (fols. 369v, 404v; figs. 6 and 7, pls. 13-14). A second Ottoman feature—janissaries—is found in the illustration of the mourners around Iskandar's bier (fol. 346v; fig. 8).²⁴

A less apparent Ottoman theme can be uncovered in the illustration depicting Khusrau Parviz going to a hunt with a large retinue of attendants (H. 1486, fol. 512v).²⁵ The courtiers accompanying the royal procession carry bunches of flowers, and although the text states that the king had 200 hunters with incense burners and 200 young attendants with flowers, who rode in front of him, so that their fragrances would float back at him, similar images do not exist in Safavid *Shahnama* illustrations.

This extraordinary scene therefore appears to have been inspired by the Ottoman habit of including flowers in any festive or public occasion. Fresne-Canaye, who was in Istanbul in 1573, writes that the inhabitants of the city "always carry [a flower] about, held in their hand or set in their turban."²⁶ Fifteenth and sixteenth-century Ottoman miniatures depict sultans and courtiers sniffing flowers,²⁷ while 18th-century single-figure

see Francis Richard, *Splendeurs persanes*, 186-87, 203, cat. no. 146, and *L'Etrange et le Merveilleux en terres d'Islam*, 206-7, cat. no. 143.

²² Uluç, *Turkman governors*, 290, 429-33, and figs. 223, 325.

²³ Fehmi E. Karatay, *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi Farsça Yazmalar Kataloğu*, nos. F. 339 and F. 381. These manuscripts are catalogued by Filiz Çağman & Zeren Tanındı, *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi Minyatürlü Yazmalar Kataloğu* (in preparation). I would like to thank the authors for allowing me access to their unpublished work.

²⁴ Çağman, "XVI Yüzyıl Sonlarında Mevlevi Dergahlarında Gelişen Bir Minyatür Okulu", fig. 9; Filiz Çağman & Zeren Tanındı, *Topkapı Palace Museum: Islamic miniature painting*, fig. 60.

²⁵ Atasoy & Çağman, *Turkish miniature painting*, pl. 36; Nurhan Atasoy, *A garden for the sultan: Gardens and flowers in Ottoman culture*, 65, figs. 54-55.

²⁶ M.H. Hauser, *Le Voyage de Levant de Philippe du Fresne-Canaye (1573)*, 87. Atasoy, *A garden for the Sultan*, 46.

²⁷ The famous miniature portraits of Mehmed II and Barbaros Hayreddin Paşa, the grand admiral of Sultan Süleyman (r. 1520-68) are perhaps the best known. In the *Süley-*



Figures 2-3. Frontispiece: 'Solomon and Bilqis enthroned'. Firdausi, *Shahnama*, c. 1590-1600. Topkapı Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 1486, fols. 1v-2r.





Figure 8. 'Mourners around Iskandar's bier'. Firdausi, *Shahnama*, c. 1590-1600. Topkapı Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 1486, fol. 346v.

portraits by the Ottoman artist Levni depict the subject almost always holding a flower in his or her hand.²⁸ Figures with flowers in their turbans are seen in late 16th-century depictions, which support Fresne-Canaye's words.²⁹ In the great processions that marked occasions such as royal engagements, weddings, and births, it was the custom for huge circular wooden trays overflowing with flowers to be paraded through the streets of Istanbul.³⁰ Trays of flowers were, for example, paraded both in the 1582 and the 1720 imperial circumcision festivals. They are recorded in the illustrations of Nakkaş Osman and Levni in the respective *surnames* (festival books) of Intizami (TSMK, H. 1344, fols. 34v-35r)³¹ and Vehbi (TSMK, A. 3593, fol. 108r).³² Melling, an architect who worked for the Ottoman court during the reign of Selim III (1789-1807), recorded round trays of flowers in his engraving of an 18th-century bridal procession.³³ An engraving from the book of the Ottoman interpreter of the Swedish ambassador, Mouradgea d'Ohsson, depicting the ceremonial procession prior to the departure of the new *Ka'ba* covering that was prepared at the Ottoman court each year, also includes trays bearing flowers in vases carried on camels.³⁴ A third 18th-century depiction of a large round tray of flowers (in this case, tulips) set on the floor besides an Ottoman sultan is found in an album depicting Ottoman costumes and character types prepared for

manname, an illustrated history of the major events of the reign of Sultan Süleyman between his accession in 1520 and 1555 that was completed in 1558, Sultan Süleyman himself is portrayed smelling a rosebud and listening to music (TSMK, H. 1517, f. 321v), see Esin Atıl, *Süleymanname. The illustrated history of Süleyman the Magnificent*, pl. 29; Atasoy, *A garden for the sultan*, 88, 126, 130, 154 and figs. 93, 170, 174, 210.

²⁸ Atasoy, *A garden for the sultan*, 46-47 and 98-99, figs. 41-45 and 115, 116, 120.

²⁹ A detached miniature of a coffeehouse shows all the turbans, whether worn by their owners or discarded on the floor, with flowers in their folds (Dublin Chester Beatty Library, T4391, f. 91r), see Halil İnalçık & Günsel Renda, eds, *Ottoman civilization*, II, 1088, fig. 706. An album drawing from the Paris Louvre Museum (MAO 1254) has a fashionably dressed youth with a rose stuck in his turban, see *Istanbul, Isfahan, Delhi*, 91-92, cat. no. 3. Roses are also depicted between the folds of turbans on the tombstones of Ottoman officials, Atasoy, *A garden for the sultan*, 96, pls. 109-110.

³⁰ Çağatay Uluçay, "Fatma ve Safiye Sultanların Düğünlerine Ait Bir Araştırma", 139-40, 149.

³¹ Nurhan Atasoy, *1582 Sürname-i Hümayun: An imperial celebration*, 13-14 and 40-41.

³² Esin Atıl, *Levni and the Surname: The story of an eighteenth century Ottoman festival*, 162.

³³ Antoine Ignace Melling, *Voyage Pittoresque de Constantinople et des Rives du Bosphore*, unnumbered pages; Atasoy, *A garden for the sultan*, 68, figs. 60-61.

³⁴ Mouradgea d'Ohsson, *Tableau générale de l'Empire Ottoman*, pl. 50; Atasoy, *A garden for the sultan*, 69, figs. 62-66.

the French ambassador Count Choiseul-Gouffier.³⁵ Profusions of flower vases were used, possibly as air fresheners, in all kinds of gatherings,³⁶ as well as in public spaces where people congregated, such as coffee houses,³⁷ and mosques.³⁸

Although the illustrated copies of the *Shahnama* draw more attention in modern studies by art historians, its text must have been just as important, if not more so, for the Ottomans, for whom it appears to have had a semi-documentary function as an historical source. The Ottoman author Ahmedi, who presented his *İskendername* in 1395 to the Ottoman prince Süleyman Çelebi (d. 1410) b. Bayezid I (1389-1402), included in his work a section on the history of pre-Islamic Iran, which he derived from the *Shahnama* of Firdausi.³⁹

The Ottoman medallioned genealogies called *silsilename*, mostly produced around the end of the 16th century, provide another similar pointer to the Ottoman view of the *Shahnama* of Firdausi. Although surviving examples of the *silsilename* are much less numerous than those of the *Shahnama*, Ottoman archival book registers list *silsilename* copies almost as much as those of the *Shahnama* itself, suggesting that it used to be one of the most popular books for collectors.⁴⁰ The Ottomans shared a common heritage with the Islamicate dynasties in planning their genealogies.⁴¹ These were abbreviated world histories presenting a genealogical framework stretching from Adam to Muhammad, the caliphs, the pre-

³⁵ Pingaud L. Choiseul-Gouffier, *Voyage pittoresque dans l'Empire Ottoman, en Grèce dans la Troade*, fig. 98; Atasoy, *A garden for the sultan*, 67, fig. 59.

³⁶ Gelibolulu Mustafa Âli notes in his discussion of table manners at banquets that the room should be “decked out” with fresh fruits and flowers in vases during drinking parties (*bâde meclisi*), *Görgü ve Toplum Kuralları Üzerinde Ziyâfet Sofraları*, 159. For such decked out rooms in Ottoman miniatures see, Atasoy, *A garden for the sultan*, 31, fig. 9, showing Selim II seated in a pavilion by the sea with six flower-filled vases lined behind the red lattice fence in the foreground (TSMK, A. 3595, f. 13r), 71, fig. 69, showing a gathering before Murad IV with flower vases on the circular tray before the sultan (TSMK, H. 2148, f. 11v) and p. 125, fig. 169, showing a gathering before Mehmed III with vases of flowers on the floor in the foreground (TSMK, H. 889, f. 8v).

³⁷ Thomas Allom & Robert Walsh, *Constantinople: The scenery of seven churches*, has an engraving of a coffee house with large pots of flowers placed on the floor around an indoor fountain. Atasoy, *A garden for the sultan*, 124, fig. 166.

³⁸ The 17th-century Ottoman traveller Evliya Çelebi mentions Edirne mosques where flowers were placed “in vases among the rows of worshippers”, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, II, 243.

³⁹ Ahmedi, *İskendername*, verses 5078-5988.

⁴⁰ Uluç, *Turkman governors*, 471-78.

⁴¹ Here, the word ‘Islamicate’ is used in the sense that was introduced by Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, 1, 58.

Islamic Persian rulers and subsequent Muslim dynasties down to Murad III (1574-95). The medallion portraits of the foremost figures were inserted in each of these periods.⁴² The Ottoman *silsilenames* use the *Shahnama* of Firdausi as the source from which they extract the pre-Islamic history of the region, and include portraits of personages like Kayumars, Jamshid, Zahhak, Afrasiyab, Rustam, Iskandar and others. These run parallel to the prophetic genealogies on the same pages. The text also gives the co-epochal parallels for some: for example, it corresponds the reign of Tahmuras to the time of the prophet Idris.⁴³

A sense of continuity permeates Ottoman histories and genealogies, which place the Ottoman dynasty at the end of a chain of Muslim dynasties following the Umayyads and the 'Abbasids, but always emphasizing their own importance over and above the earlier ones.⁴⁴ Yazıcıoğlu 'Ali, writing for Murad II in 1423, says that the Ottoman sultan is the most suitable and the most worthy of sovereignty and the highest in origin and ancestry of all the remaining clans of the Oghuz, including the Chinggisid Khans.⁴⁵ According to İnalçık, Bayezid I assumed the title of *Sultan al-Rum* in order to place his dynasty as the heir to the Saljuqs over all Anatolia. Ottoman genealogies linked them to the tribal Oghuz tradition, which was a way of claiming both an equal status to the Timurids in an attempt to escape their vassalage and a superior one over the rest of the Anatolian Turkish principalities.⁴⁶

The clearest indication of the Ottomans' following the tradition of Firdausi's *Shahnama* at the Ottoman court is the use of the name *şehname* for their dynastic histories and *şehnameci* for the sultan's official court historiographer. The post was established by Sultan Süleyman I in the 1550s and existed for the rest of the 16th century until it was abolished in the early 17th. At least 15 works are known to have been produced by the five consecutive holders of the title *şehnameci*.⁴⁷

⁴² Samanids, Buyid, Saljuqs, Ghaznavids, Chinggisids, etc.

⁴³ Sadi Bayram, "Musavvir Hüseyin Tarafından Minyatürleri Yapılan ve Halen Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüğü Arşivinde Muhafaza Edilen Silsile-nâme", 255.

⁴⁴ Cemal Kafadar, "Historical background of the Ottoman Empire", 26; Halil İnalçık, "The rise of Ottoman historiography", 125; Irène Beldiceanu-Steinherr, *Recherches sur les actes des règnes des sultans Osman, Orkhan et Murad I*, 64-74; Barbara Flemming, "Political genealogies in the 16th century", 125.

⁴⁵ Cited by Flemming, "Political genealogies", 25.

⁴⁶ İnalçık, "The rise of Ottoman historiography", 125.

⁴⁷ Christine Woodhead, "An experiment in official historiography", 157-82.

The illustrated Ottoman *şehnâmes* penned by the court *şehnâmecis* began to be produced during Süleyman's reign, when the post of *şehnâ-meci* was established. The first Anatolian *şehnâme* in the same style and metre as Firdausi's was written much earlier, however. A Saljuq *şehnâme* was written in Persian by Dehhani for Alaaddin Keykubad III (r. 1298-1301).⁴⁸ After the dissolution of the Rum Saljuqs, the tradition of having *şehnâmes* composed for their own dynasty was continued in Anatolia by the beys of Karaman.⁴⁹

The earliest general histories by Ottoman writers appear to be from the early 15th century, following the death of Sultan Bayezid I after Timur's armies defeated him in 1402.⁵⁰ In this first period the original sources of Ottoman historiography were a type of religio-heroic literature called *menakibnames*. After 1422, the Ottoman historian Aşık Paşazade added his own personal experiences and oral information to the earlier accounts, which he says he summarized in his own work.⁵¹

As time went on, more sophisticated historical accounts were written in high literary style and mostly in Persian. During Mehmed II's reign, this kind of literature referred to under the general name of *şehnâme* seems to have flourished. Latifi writes in his *Tezkire* that Mehmed II "granted salaries and yearly pensions" to thirty poets, who were "putting in rhyme his history or writing poems in his praise."⁵²

After Mehmed II's death in 1481, a second surge of Ottoman general histories was produced.⁵³ Bayezid II, who was conscious of having a newly established universal Muslim empire, was dissatisfied with the current histories, and gave orders for the two great *munshis* of his time to write a history "worthy of the Ottoman house": Idris Bidlisi (d. 1520) in Persian (*Hasht Bihisht*) (c. 1506), and Ibn Kemal (d. 1534) in Turkish (*Tevarikh-i Al-i Osman*) (completed in 1510).⁵⁴ The first illustrated Otto-

⁴⁸ Köprülü, "Anadolu Selçukluları Tarihi'nin yerli Kaynakları", 383 and 396; Tekin, "Turkish literature", 499.

⁴⁹ Köprülü, "Anadolu Selçukluları Tarihi'nin yerli Kaynakları", 399 and 401.

⁵⁰ İnalcık, "The rise of Ottoman historiography", 152.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 157.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 163.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 152.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 166. Sara Nur Yildiz, "Ottoman historical writing in Persian, 1400-1600," explains that Ibn Kemal was ordered to produce his history after the completion of Idris Bitlisi's work, which was not well received at court.

man *şehname* in Persian verse, called *Şehname-i Melik-i Ümmi* also dates to the reign of Bayezid II,⁵⁵ before the post of *şehnameci* was established.

The production of the imperial *şehnâmes* written by the *şehnamecis* appears to have been a strictly controlled affair. The words of two of the holders of the post, Lokman and Ta'likizade, imply that the approval of a number of officials, including the sultan himself, had to be obtained. In the preface of *Şehname-i Selim Han* (TSMK, A. 3595) dated 988/1581, Lokman describes how samples of completed pages had to be first approved by a committee of officials headed by the grand vizier Sokullu Mehmed Paşa. They were then taken to the sultan, who had to find them acceptable before work could continue.⁵⁶ In the introduction to his account of the 1594 Hungarian campaign, Ta'likizade mentions that Sultan Murad III had seen and rejected one of his earlier efforts before his departure for Hungary.⁵⁷

By the end of the 16th century there was a development in Ottoman *şehnâmes* that distanced them further from the tradition of the *Shahnama* of Firdausi. The outputs of the earlier *şehnamecis* were in Persian verse, following Firdausi's style and in the same metre as his *Shahnama*. This gradually changed and they were written either in verse or prose, but in Turkish, which was a development that took place simultaneously with the establishment of the classical canon in Ottoman arts of the book, when the Timurid and Turkman influences from Herat and Tabriz were faded out to be replaced by a newly formulated local court aesthetic.⁵⁸ The fourth holder of the post, Ta'likizade (d. c. 1008/1599), whose known works are all in Turkish, remarks that "he wrote in Ottoman Turkish rather than Persian, in compliance with the wishes of the sultan."⁵⁹

Another fundamental difference between the Ottoman *şehnâmes* and their original model, besides their being contemporary accounts of the reigning Ottoman dynasty, rather than an account, albeit legendary, of a distant past, appears to be the reason behind their production. The

⁵⁵ TSMK, H. 1123, *Shahnama az guftar-i Malik-i Ummi* (*Shahnama after the speech of the Illiterate King*), copied by Derviş Muhammed b. Abdullah Nakkaş, c. 1500; *Turks: A journey of a thousand years, 600-1600*, 442, cat. no. 258.

⁵⁶ Filiz Çağman, "Şahname-i Selim Han ve minyatürleri", 414.

⁵⁷ Christine Woodhead, "Murad III and the historians", 94-95.

⁵⁸ On the 16th-century Ottoman stylistic synthesis, see Gülru Necipoğlu, "A Kanun for the state, a canon for the arts: Conceptualizing the classical synthesis of Ottoman art and architecture", 195-216. On the Timurid heritage of the Ottomans, see Lâle Uluç, "The common Timurid heritage of the three capitals of Islamic arts", 39-53.

⁵⁹ Ta'likizade, *Şehname-i Hümayun*, Istanbul, Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum, inv. no. 1965, f. 12v; cited and translated by Woodhead, *Ta'likizâde's şehnâme-i hümayûn*, 19.

Ottoman *sehnames* have been categorized as “the propagandist voice of the court,”⁶⁰ since official control of the court may imply such a conclusion. Their production as single court copies with extremely limited audiences, however, negates this idea. Christine Woodhead, after extensively studying the office of the Ottoman *sehnameci*, has concluded that the Ottoman *sehnames* were “literary and cultural artefacts first and vehicles for sultanic propaganda second,” whereas the first requirement in the choice of *sehnameci* appointments was literary ability.⁶¹ By contrast, the *Shahnama* of Firdausi was more widely disseminated.

Although the most common modern description of Firdausi’s *Shahnama* as “the legendary Iranian epic” primarily appears to refer to modern Persian speaking societies, it was considered as part of the common Turko-Persian heritage by the Turkish speaking inhabitants of the area. Turkic rulers of the Greater Iran region were avid patrons and collectors of Persian and Persianate literature, and the *Shahnama* was always one of the most favoured works. In Anatolia, Turkish speaking polities regarded the pre-modern geographic region of Greater Iran as a trilingual community of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish speaking peoples. It was thus a Turko-Persian world of mixed ethnic origin of Iranian, Mongolian, Turkish, and Arabic populations, which was ruled from the 10th century onwards by various Turko-Mongol dynasties originating in Central Asia. Within this context Firdausi’s *Shahnama* was considered as part of their own heritage as well. Such a conclusion is implied for example, by the names of the Saljuq Rum princes. After the demise of the Great Saljuqs of Iran (1157) during the reign of Kılıç Arslan II (r. 1155-92), Rum Saljuqs princes began to be named after the heroes of ancient Persian epics. After the fall of the Danishmendids (1178), Rum Saljuq rulers were also given the names of Firdausi’s heroes.⁶²

As Cemal Kafadar has explained: “A good Rumi [Ottoman] intellectual or artist may have boasted that the *Rumis* had outdone the ‘*Acems* [Persians] and Arabs, but would never doubt the need to be steeped in Arabic and Persian classics and compete with contemporaneous exemplars in those traditions, which he or she would consider her own.”⁶³ Indeed, in his *Counsel for Sultans* completed in 1581, the Ottoman histo-

⁶⁰ Baki Tezcan, “The politics of early modern Ottoman historiography”, 183.

⁶¹ Christine Woodhead, “Reading Ottoman *sehnames*: official historiography in the late sixteenth century”, 80. I would like to express my thanks to the author here for sending me her paper before publication.

⁶² Kafadar, “A Rome of one’s own”, 9 and 21-22, n. 4.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 15.

rian Mustafa Âli enumerates the classical Persian authors among his “host of spiritual teachers, Master Firdevsi of Tus, the crowned Galen of the articulate, Master Sa’di of Shiraz, the mystery-invested *sheikh* of the eloquent, even more so the unquestionable solver of mysteries Master Hafiz of Shiraz, nicknamed the Tongue of the Other World, as well as the most articulate one of recent times, the most erudite of all speakers, Master Nuruddin Jami.”⁶⁴

The ambivalent attitude towards the Iranian–Turanian distinction in the *Shahnama* itself, in which the warring Iranians and Turanians descend from a common ancestor, Faridun,⁶⁵ can be compared with the porous medieval and early modern boundaries between states, which allowed a far greater freedom of passage for both people and ideas than is implied by modern national borders. The multiple heritages of the Ottomans are manifest in the verses of the Ottoman poet Sûzî Çelebi (d. 1524), who writes:

I asked a veteran: “whose troops are these?”
He answered: “these are Ali Bey’s troops.
Some are from Arabia, some Persia,
Some from Jerusalem, some Mekka,
Some are nobles with quiet elegance,
Some dervishes, with faithful acceptance.”⁶⁶

Metin Kunt evaluates Firdausi’s presentation of his *Shahnama* to the Turkic Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna in the early 11th century as earmarking the beginning of a “new style of government”. As such, the account of the pre-Islamic Persian rulers from the *Shahnama* of Firdausi set the values and virtues of kingship. The *Shahnama*’s version of Iskandar was idealized to become one of the exemplary rulers of the Islamic world and the conquering Turko-Mongol rulers of Iran from then on “lived under the ethos of the *Shahnama* and under the shadow of Iskandar.”⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Andreas Tietze, ed. and trans. *Mustafâ ‘Âlî’s Counsel for Sultans of 1581*, 23; transliterated Turkish text, 98–99.

⁶⁵ Kafadar, “A Rome of one’s own”, 21–22, n. 4

⁶⁶ Ağâh Sırrı Levend, *Gazavât-nâmeler ve Mihaloğlu Ali Bey’in Gazavât-nâmesi*, 334; my translation:

Didüm bir gaziye bu ne çeridür
Didi bunlar ‘Ali Beğ leşkeridür
Kimi gelmiş ‘Arabdan kimi ‘Acemden
Kimi Kuds ü kimi Beytü’l-haremden
Kimi beğ-zadedür sahib-tecemmül
Kimi dervîşdür ehl-i tevekkül.

⁶⁷ Metin Kunt, “Ottomans and Safavids: States, statecraft and societies, 1500–1800”, 193–94.

According to Kunt, during the 16th century, the Ottomans, with their efficient imperial organization, were claimants of the Sasanian heritage, while the Safavids were closer to the Inner Asian roots of later Muslim empires.⁶⁸ He specifies that ironically, when Ottoman authors of the time “depicted contemporary west Asian polities with reference to the *Shah-nameh*, they cast themselves as representing legendary Iran and the Safavids as Turan.”⁶⁹ Indeed, Ottoman authors frequently referred to the protagonists of the *Shahnama* for comparison purposes. For example, the third Ottoman *şehnameci* Lokman compares Sokollu Mehmed Paşa to Khusrau in the *Tatimme-i Ahval-i Sultan Süleyman*.⁷⁰

The self-consciously produced Ottoman dynastic histories, comprising detailed records of the military achievements of the Ottoman sultans, followed the *Shahnama* genre. They were produced when the repeated victories in battle of the early Ottoman sultans reinforced the image of the ruler primarily as a successful military leader, and had a close association between the person of the sultan and the *Shahnama* heroes. They were then richly illustrated and deposited in the imperial treasury, presumably to become visual demonstrations of the Ottoman invincibility for future generations of the dynasty. It is significant that the few *şehnanes* that were produced in the first half of the 17th century were commissioned by Osman II (1618-22) and Murad IV (1623-40). Both of these sultans aspired to recreate the sultan’s military role and took personal command of their armies.⁷¹ It is important to note that the Turkish versions of Firdausi’s *Shahnama*, the *Şehname-i Türki*, were also all illustrated only in the periods when the dynastic Ottoman *şehnanes* were written and illustrated at the Ottoman court.

The fourth Ottoman *şehnameci* Ta’likizade reinforces the above stated view of the *Shahnama* for the Ottomans. He says that just as Firdausi was commissioned by Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna to versify his work so that it might stand as an exemplar of the bravest feats of courage and daring, so

⁶⁸ I would like to express my thanks to the author here for sending me a second article in which he analyzes the “Turko-Persia” model proposed by Robert Canfield, see Metin Kunt, “Characterizing Ottoman Polity: “Turko-Persia” and the Ottomans”, 311-24; Robert L. Canfield, “The Turko-Persian Tradition”, 1-35.

⁶⁹ Kunt, “Ottomans and Safavids”, 196. The word “polities” was mistakenly printed as “politics” in the published version of the article. István Nyitrai, “The third period of the Ottoman-Safavid conflict: Struggle of political ideologies”, 161-76.

⁷⁰ Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Ms 413, fol. 92v, line 28, cited by István Nyitrai, “Rendering history topical: One aspect of a 16th century Persian historical epic in the Ottoman Empire”, 115.

⁷¹ Woodhead, “An experiment in official historiography”, 180.

was he determined to compose a work designed to display the principal features that distinguished the rule of the Ottoman sultans, and to represent their state as the ideal of sovereignty.⁷²

That the Ottomans considered or wished to present their own dynasty as superior even to the heroes of the *Shahnama* is made manifest by the third Ottoman *şehnameci* Seyyid Lokman, who directly compares the protagonists of the *Shahnama* with the Ottoman sultans in his chronicle of the reign of Selim II (*Şehname-i Selim Han*), completed in 988/1581, during the reign of Murad III, and although he praises Firdausi and his work, he simply says that he was the luckier one since he was writing the *Şehname* of the sultan.⁷³

In conclusion, at least two functions can be posited for the *Shahnama* of Firdausi in the lands of Rum. The first, as a model for the Ottoman dynastic *şehnanes* and an inspiration for its name, as well as for the post of the official historiographer, is the more immediately apparent. The *Shahnama*'s second, semi-documentary, function as a source for the pre-Islamic history of Greater Iran, which was shared by the Anatolian Turkish speaking polities, including the Ottomans, is less apparent, but not less important.

The Ottoman preoccupation with the *shahnama* genre is manifested under three distinct circumstances that took place in the second half of the 16th century. First of all, the luxury copies of the *Shahnama* of Firdausi were collected by the Ottoman élite. They had become available in Istanbul, due to the flow of Persian illustrated manuscripts to Ottoman court circles that increased after the first Ottoman–Safavid battle at Çaldıran (Chaldiran) in 1514, initially as booty, later, as purchases or diplomatic gifts. Secondly the office of the *şehnameci* was created and the illustrated Ottoman dynastic *şehnanes* were produced. Finally, together with the production of the Ottoman dynastic *şehnanes*, illustrated copies of the translation of the *Shahnama* of Firdausi, the *Şehname-i Türki* were also produced.

In the early 17th century the post of the *şehnameci* was abolished, apparently because the Ottoman interest in the *Shahnama* of Firdausi ended: both in acquiring its luxury Persian copies and in producing its illustrated Turkish versions. The illustrated Persian manuscripts of the Ottoman imperial treasury are almost all from the 16th century or earlier, suggesting that by the early 17th century, their inflow, including that of

⁷² *Ibid.*, 168.

⁷³ TSMK, A. 3595, fol. 13b; Çağman, "Şahname-i Selim Han", 414.

the *Shahnama* of Firdausi, into Ottoman territories had ceased.⁷⁴ Thus the era of the *shahnama* genre in the lands of Rum came to a close.

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⁷⁴ Uluç, *Turkman governors*, chapter nine. Only two out of the 50 illustrated copies of the *Shahnama* of Firdausi that survive among the former Ottoman imperial holdings are from the 17th century: TSMK, H. 1501 dated 1010/1602 and H. 1498 dated 1037-38 (1628-29). [H. 1501 is listed under the 16th century in Tanındı's chapter in this volume, n. 11 (ed.).]

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BAHRAM'S FEAT OF HUNTING DEXTERITY AS ILLUSTRATED
IN FIRDAUSI'S *SHAHNAMA*, NIZAMI'S *HAFT PAIKAR*
AND AMIR KHUSRAU'S *HASHT BIHISHT*

Adeela Qureshi

علی الخصوص سخن آفرین خطه طوس
که در ریاض سخن بوده پیر دهقانی
قیاس کار ز شهنامه اش یگر که نیست
بزور بازوی او رستم سجستانی

Especially that most eloquent one of Tus
Who was an old husbandman of the gardens of speech
Estimate his deeds from the Shahnama
For Rustam of Sijistan is not his equal in strength of arm.¹

In these verses, the Mughal poet-laureate Faizi (d. 1595) alludes to Firdausi's verbal dexterity and further maintains that if he had been under the appreciative gaze of his Majesty [Akbar], "his days would not have been dark nights".² Moreover, citations from the *Shahnama* are frequent in Mughal historical texts and Abu'l-Fazl, Akbar's court historian, writes that among the celebrated books there were hardly any that were not read out in His Majesty's assembly hall. In addition to historical works, some of the texts frequently recited in the presence of the emperor included the *Akhlaq-i Nasiri*; the *Divan* of Anvari; the *Bustan* and *Gulistan* of Sa'di; the collected *masnavis* of Nizami; the works of Amir Khusrau and Jami; the *Qabusnama*, and the *Shahnama* of Firdausi.³

Abu'l-Fazl affirms that the imperial library was divided into several sections and was organised according to the relative value of the books,

¹ These verses are from Faizi's *qasida*, in which he refers to the attributes of several poets including 'Attar, Khaqani, Sa'di and Sana'i, incorporated into Abu'l-Fazl's *Akbar-nama*, 308, trans. Henry Beveridge, II, 454.

² *Ibid.*, 308

³ Abu'l-Fazl 'Allami, *The A'in-i-Akbari*, trans. I, 110.

and that prose books, poetical works, Hindi, Persian, Greek, Kashmiri, and Arabic, were all separately placed.⁴ The order of these categories led the historian Bada'uni to believe that fundamental Islamic works were of least interest to the ruler.⁵ An inventory compiled after the emperor Akbar's death in 1605 reveals that the library had accumulated a vast holding of 24,000 manuscripts.⁶

In the 34th *a'in* of the *A'in-i Akbari*, the author specifies that owing to the emperor's inclination for the arts, several Persian poetic and prose texts were embellished with paintings—hence a large number of paintings were collected in the royal atelier.⁷ Yet, literary references to the illustration of the *Shahnama* at the Mughal court are fairly ambiguous. Bada'uni, the author of the *Muntakhab al-tawarikh*, asserts that the emperor had the *Shahnama*, and the story of Amir Hamza transcribed in 17 volumes and then had it illuminated with large quantities of gold.⁸ Nonetheless, this assertion is slightly inaccurate, as we know from other historical sources that the *Hamzanama* was produced in 14 volumes.⁹ From this excerpt it is also difficult to determine whether the biographer is referring to an illustrated copy or just a richly illuminated version of Firdausi's text. Furthermore, in the *Muntakhab al-tawarikh* the author also reveals that Akbar had ordered Taqi al-Din of Shushtar to paraphrase the *Shahnama* into prose.¹⁰ Consequently, however, in the case of the illustration of the *Shahnama* at the Mughal court there is a discrepancy between visual representations and historical accounts.

In view of this ambiguity, the purpose of this chapter is firstly to touch upon the subject of the illustration of Firdausi's text within the imperial studio, with reference to extant pictorial material. Secondly, the artists and writers' longstanding practice of imitation and borrowing will be

⁴ *Ibid.*, 109–10.

⁵ al-Bada'uni, *Muntakhab al-tawarikh*, II, trans. W. H. Lowe, 104.

⁶ Joannes de Laet, *The Empire of the Great Mogol: A translation of De Laet's description of India: Fragment of Indian history*, 108–9. It was during the emperor Shah Jahan's reign that detailed accounts of the manuscripts in the imperial library were regularly recorded. Vincent Smith observes that Sebastian Manrique, who visited the court during Shah Jahan's reign, copied the numbers and compiled an independent list from Mughal registers. Vincent Smith, *Akbar the Great Mogul*, 424.

⁷ *A'in-i Akbari*, trans. I, 113–15.

⁸ *Muntakhab al-tawarikh*, trans. II, 329.

⁹ For a detailed discussion pertaining to the number of volumes involved in the production of the *Hamzanama* with reference to historical sources, see Pramod Chandra, *Tutinama: Tales of a Parrot*, 63, n. 38. Also see Seyller, *The Adventures of Hamza: Painting and storytelling in Mughal India*, 32–38.

¹⁰ *Muntakhab al-tawarikh*, trans. II, 418.

examined in relation to the episode of Bahram Gur hunting in the company of his slave girl. The episode will be discussed in relation to three important literary texts, in each of which the scene evolves slightly differently. While the story of Bahram and the slave girl is alluded to in several literary sources, the model for the first part of Nizami's Bahram Gur and Fitna episode in the *Haft Paikar* derives from Firdausi's story in the *Shahnama*. Subsequently, the anecdote of Bahram and Dilaram hunting in Amir Khusrau Dihlavi's *Hasht Bihisht* was in turn based on Nizami's version in the *Haft Paikar*.¹¹ This paper will not pursue the continuation of the narrative following Bahram's demonstration of hunting prowess and the slave-girl's reproachful response in all three texts—represented by Azada's trampling in the *Shahnama*, Fitna's skilful demonstration of carrying the ox up a flight of forty stairs in the *Haft Paikar*, or Dilaram being thrown from her horse in the *Hasht Bihisht* and subsequently acquiring musical skills. Hence it will focus only on the comparison of the initial feat specified in all three narratives.

THE ILLUSTRATION OF THE *SHAHNAMA* AT THE MUGHAL COURT

Considering Akbar's taste for epics and classical romances, which seems to have developed from the 1560s, some scholars have acknowledged the existence of dispersed paintings of imperial quality from Mughal *Shahnamas*.¹² By contrast, the possibility of an extant illustrated manuscript commissioned by the emperor Akbar has been largely overlooked.

¹¹ For the main differences in all three episodes see Appendix. Also see J. C. Bürgel, "The Romance", 166-75.

¹² See e.g. the illustration of Zal and Rudaba (V. 6) dated c. 1580 in the Keir Collection, in B.W. Robinson, ed. *Islamic painting and the arts of the book*, 237-38, pl. 3. Another late 16th-century illustration from the *Shahnama* in the British Museum of 'Rustam with his horse Rakhsh shot full of arrows' (BM 1929.9-17.0248) has been reworked as an album leaf, J. M. Rogers, *Mughal miniatures*, 76-77, fig. 48. Yet another painting dated c. 1610, from a copy of the *Shahnama* perhaps commissioned by the emperor Jahangir in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), shows Faridun striking Zakhak with his animal-headed mace (M. 78.9.5), Pratapaditya Pal, *Indian painting: A catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection*, I, 254-56, no. 68. Two illustrations from this manuscript were formerly in the Rothschild Collection while another is in the Cleveland Museum of Art (45.1717). Another painting from this manuscript appeared on the art market in 2003. See Francesca Galloway, *Indian miniatures and works of art*, no. 2, 6. The Chester Beatty Library also has seven stray pages from this manuscript (11A.34). Linda Y. Leach, *Mughal and other Indian paintings: From the Chester Beatty Library*, I, 327-29.

A rare manuscript of exalted quality comprising 37 Akbar period illustrations appeared on the art market in October 1994.¹³ The manuscript has 485 folios—the main text ends on folio 481 and is followed by four leaves of a concordance. It is inscribed in a neat and distinctive *naskh* in four columns of 31 lines per folio. Unlike most illustrated manuscripts from the royal library, the flyleaf of this volume bears no seals or notes of transfer and it also lacks both a preface and colophon. This suggests that either it left the library at an early date, perhaps as a royal gift, or that folios from the manuscript are now lost.¹⁴

Conceivably, the manuscript was transcribed at an early date whilst spaces for the paintings were left blank and were then added later around c. 1580 by artists at the Mughal court. In addition to the 37 illustrations the manuscript is embellished with four sets of illuminated double-pages containing text.¹⁵ Folio 1r has been left blank with the exception of the number 153 inscribed in European numerals. The predominantly blue and gold illuminated page or *sarlauh* (fig. 1), written in two columns of 19 lines of *naskh*, contains the opening lines of Firdausi's text. The dominant use of blue and the fairly uncomplicated pattern suggests a non-Persian origin. Persian manuscripts often entered the library as the outcome of successful Mughal campaigns or as gifts from high-ranking nobles who wanted to ensure the emperor's generosity.¹⁶ On the basis of the script and its similarity to an illuminated frontispiece (fol. 1v) from a royal copy of the *Sharafnama* (Book of Honour) made for Sultan Nusrat Shah in Bengal around the same time (BL, Or. 13836), Robert Skelton has dated it to c. 1530–32.¹⁷

John Seyller asserts that the practice of adding miniatures to manuscripts of an earlier provenance was not unusual as numerous texts of an earlier date found their way to the Mughal court, where they underwent various forms of refurbishment, including the replacement of missing

¹³ Sotheby's, *Oriental manuscripts and miniatures*, London, 19 October 1994, lot 112.

¹⁴ Foliation in Persian numerals is partially trimmed off on most folios but reveals that perhaps ten leaves from the manuscript are missing. For a discussion of seals and inscriptions on Mughal manuscripts see John Seyller, "The inspection and valuation of manuscripts in the Imperial Mughal Library", 243–349.

¹⁵ Ff. 1v–2r; 136v–137r; 235v–236r; 378v–379r are the points at which double-page illumination occurs.

¹⁶ Seyller, "The inspection and valuation of manuscripts", 252, n. 37.

¹⁷ I am grateful to Robert Skelton for discussing this with me. Also see Robert Skelton, "A royal Sultanate manuscript", 135–52. However, the illuminated opening page of the *Sharafnama* is written in two columns of 13 lines of *naskh*, containing the opening verses of Nizami's text.



Figure 1. Early 16th-century illuminated opening page from a Sultanate/Mughal *Shah-nama*, c. 1580-85, Sotheby's, 19 October 1994, lot 112, fol. 1v.

folios and text passages—in addition to new illustrations of missing subjects. This practice is seen as early as 1556 in the Cleveland *Tutinama* manuscript and was an established convention during Jahangir's reign.¹⁸ Some of the finest artists in the imperial atelier, including Basawan, Kesu, Lal, Miskin and Mukund, were responsible for the illustrations in this manuscript; their names appear beneath the miniatures in the lower margins.¹⁹ Miskin and Mukund seem to have contributed the most paintings. A contemporary *Khamasa* of Nizami in the Keir collection shares a similar history; the text was transcribed in the early 16th century by a scribe whose name is given on folio 356v as 'Ali ibn Mubarak al-Fahraji, and who according to the colophon dated 31 July 1506 (fol. 107r), copied the manuscript at Yazd. Like the *Shahnama*, spaces for the illustrations were left blank at the time of writing and were added later at the Mughal court between c. 1585 and 1590.²⁰

Folio 240r from this *Shahnama* illustrates Gushtasp slaying the wolf. The artist Lal, mentioned as one of Akbar's major artists in the *A'in-i Akbari*, and known for his many contributions to imperial manuscripts, is responsible for the illustration.²¹ Gushtasp appears astride a chestnut mount armed with a fine decorated shield, a quiver full of arrows and a sword, in anticipation of the fierce wolf that he proceeds to slay with his sword. The intense colour and detail of the centrally placed horse and rider make them the focus of the painting. They are silhouetted against a high rocky skyline, treated in a Persian manner. The gilded background, which is seen in most illustrations from this manuscript, creates a rich contrast with the deep hues of the small trees and the rocky terrain.

Another page (fig. 2, pl. 15) from the same manuscript depicts the episode of Ardashir hunting onagers in the company of Ardavan and his sons.²² It is attributed to the artist Mathura, best known for his commis-

¹⁸ Seyller, "Recycled images: Overpainting in early Mughal art", 64. Also see Seyller, "Overpainting in the Cleveland *Tutinama*", 283–318.

¹⁹ Ff. 39r, 77v, 130r, 180r, 242r, and 285v are painted by Kesu, while five leaves, 110r, 150r, 240r, 310v and 366r are illustrated by Lal. Miskin is the most prolific of the artists working on the manuscript and is credited with nine paintings, which occur on ff. 56r; 85v; 254r; 261v; 303v; 312r; 334v; 336r and 338v. Mukund worked on six illustrations, which include 302v, 362v, 388v, 426v, 452r and 480v. Two folios, 325r and 348r, are by Basawan.

²⁰ Robert Skelton, "Arts of the book: Sultanate and Mughal India", 238.

²¹ *A'in-i Akbari*, 114.

²² *Shahnama*, ed. Bertel's (B), VII, 121–22, vs. 158–170. The text is copied in four columns of 31 lines. Compare with f. 39v of British Library *Sharafnama*, Or. 13836 - written in four columns of 29 lines. Skelton, "A royal Sultanate manuscript", 148. This illustration is not included in Jill Norgen & Edward Davis, *Preliminary index of Shah-Nameh illustrations*.

sions in the late 16th-century *Darabnama* made for Akbar, now in the British Library (Or. 4615).²³ The scene is set in a skilfully painted rocky landscape derived from the Persian pictorial tradition, a type that subsequently became popular at the Mughal court. To the left, four mounted riders in resplendent dress ride in the direction of two onagers. The figure in the immediate foreground astride a chestnut skewbald is perhaps Ardashir as he has just unleashed an arrow and pierced an onager through its neck—a slightly inaccurate depiction of the text, according to which, Ardashir displayed his hunting skills, in the presence of courtiers and the king's sons, by shooting a male onager in the rump in such a way that the arrow passed through the animal's body "point and feather". Conceivably the individual placed just above Ardashir is Ardavan—evident from his mature face and splendid rich brocade attire. However, the artist has depicted Ardavan's arrow penetrating an onager in such a manner that its hoof has been pinned to its ear—recalling a feat usually attributed to the celebrated hunter Bahram Gur in the *Khamsa* of Nizami. This detail is an almost identical mirror image of Bahram Gur and the wild ass seen in Nizami's *Khamsa* in the Keir Collection (see below, fig. 5). The insertion of this detail thereby alters the narrative context of the anecdote and shifts the focus away from Ardashir's skilful demonstration.

THE *SHAHNAMA* IN RELATION TO ILLUSTRATIONS OF NIZAMI'S *HAFT PAIKAR*

In the *Shahnama*, the Sasanian King Bahram V spends most of his time hunting, and most of his exploits are initiated by a hunting situation. Bahram's skill in hunting his favourite prey the 'gur' (onager) merits his title 'Bahram Gur'. Indeed the stories of his feats proliferated in numerous legends and poems wherever Persian was a literary language, and were subsequently represented pictorially on ceramics, silver, stucco and in paintings over a long period of time. Abu'l-Fazl was also well acquainted with Bahram's prowess as a hunter and warrior. He writes in the *A'in*:

He was the son of Yazdagird the wicked, of the Sassanian dynasty. Since the lust of the world fills the brain with extraordinary fancies in the first flush of his success he was seized with the frenzy of adventurous travel, and leaving one of the Magi of the line of Bahman, son of Isfandiyar, as governor in his stead, he set out for India in a disguise which defied rec-

²³ See BM, Or. 4615, ff. 7v, 12r, 64v, 65v, 99v, 117r and 117v, for his work.

ognition. In those parts there was a raging elephant, which put the whole country in terror. Although the bravest warriors had attempted to kill it, they lost but their own lives. Bahram hearing of this event arrived at the place and by sheer strength of arm destroyed it.²⁴

The story of his exploit in the company of his favourite harp-playing slave girl Azada (meaning free) from Rum is the best-known hunting episode.²⁵ In the *Shahnama* (running to 34 *bait*s in length) it is portrayed as an episode in the prince's youth; its succinct nature is indicative of its comparatively minor significance for the history of Bahram's reign.²⁶

Nizami completed the *Haft Paikar* in 1197 and dedicated it to 'Ala' al-Din Korp Arslan, the ruler of Maragha. In Nizami's version of the story a number of important changes occur, including a change in the slave girl's name from Azada to Fitna (meaning troublesome), a name that suggests both temptation and testing. Instead of praising his adept display, she exclaims that it is a result of much practice and thus easily accomplished. Her reply enrages Bahram, who orders an officer to kill her. She persuades the officer to spare her life and inform the king of her death.²⁷

The portrayal of this episode in Sassanian metalwork and the decorative arts has been discussed at length by Ettinghausen and Fontana.²⁸ The relevant scenes from Firdausi's and Nizami's texts were illustrated in several valuable Persian manuscripts that made their way to the Mughal court and subsequently into the imperial library. One such example is the *Shahnama* of Muhammad Juki dated to the mid-15th century, in the collection of the Royal Asiatic Society (Morley 239). Most of the surface of the manuscript's flyleaf is gilded and bears the seals of the Mughal emperors Babur, Humayun, Jahangir, Shah Jahan, and Aurangzib. The lengthy

²⁴ *A'in-i Akbari*, trans. III, 374. The story of Bahram and the raging elephant is also recounted in Bal'ami's *Tarjama-yi Tarikh-i Tabari*. See Teresa Fitzherbert, "Bal'ami's Tabari: An illustrated manuscript of Bal'ami's *Tarjama-yi Tarikh-i Tabari* in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington", 145-46.

²⁵ B, VII, 273-75; since this paper was submitted, Alyssa Gabbay's article, "Love gone wrong, then right again: Male/female dynamics in the Bahrām Gūr—slave girl story", presented at the Leiden Shahnama conference in January 2009, has been published and allows the present version to be somewhat reduced, to avoid repetition [ed.].

²⁶ Meisami, "Fitnah or Azadah? Nizami's ethical poetic", 45; Gabbay, "Love gone wrong", 678-82.

²⁷ Meisami, "Fitnah or Azadah?", 46; Gabbay, "Love gone wrong", 682-86.

²⁸ Richard Ettinghausen, "Bahram Gur's hunting feats and the problem of identification", 25-32. Maria Vittoria Fontana, *La leggenda di Bahram Gur e Azada. Materiale per la storia de una tipologia figurative dale origini al XIV secolo.*; idem. "Ancora sulla caccia di Bahrām Gūr e Āzāda". Also see Prudence Harper, *The royal hunter: Art of the Sassanian Empire*.

inscription between Jahangir and Aurangzib's seals records the entry of the manuscript into Shah Jahan's library on 12 February 1628.²⁹ Another 15th-century manuscript acquired by the imperial library was a copy of Nizami's *Haft Paikar* now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (13.228.13). It was presented to Akbar by Mun'im Khan Khan-i Khanan around 1581, shortly after the calligrapher Maulana Azhar had restored several missing folios from the original manuscript. The inscription in the illuminated *shamsa* on folio 1r reads: "May this beautiful book be presented by Mun'im Khan, whose power is extensive and who is a lord of lords (*khankhanan*) to the vice regent of the universe (Akbar)." Folio 56v contains the colophon and bears the seals of Muhibb 'Ali servant of Akbar Shah and I'timad Khan servant of Shah Jahan. An inscription below the colophon states that the manuscript is in the hand of Maulana Azhar and includes seven illustrations painted by masters.³⁰

The examples cited confirm that Mughal artists working in the imperial scriptorium had access to depictions of the scene from an early date. However, the vibrantly attired couple with bow and harp, mounted on a camel in the Juki *Shahnama* illustration,³¹ was not used as a model by artists in Mughal India, as they chose to portray the pair of figures astride separate mounts. Bahram is usually shown on a horse, whilst Azada is occasionally depicted seated in a *howdah* on a camel but usually appears on a horse. In the illustration, the prince has just completed his final feat of pinning a gazelle's hoof to its ear. Pictorial representations of this last performance recur in several sub-imperial Mughal paintings, of which some will be briefly referred to in the course of this paper. The painting from the *Haft Paikar* now in the Metropolitan Museum, depicting Bahram hunting in the company of Fitna, is a fairly accurate illustration of the

²⁹ J.V.S. Wilkinson, *The Shah Namah of Firdausi: The book of the Persian kings*, 3 (inscription) and flyleaf f. 3r is reproduced in colour as the frontispiece to the work. 'Yazdagird hiding in the mill' (f. 531r) is the work of a Mughal artist: Robert Skelton has attributed it to Miskin. See Wilkinson, pl. XXIV; for details of Mughal notes and librarian seals on the manuscript see Barbara Brend, *Muhammad Juki's Shahnamah of Firdausi*, 163-75.

³⁰ For a discussion of the manuscript see B.W. Robinson, "Prince Baysonghor's Nizami: A speculation". T.W. Lentz & G.D. Lowry, *Timur and the princely vision*, no. 62. See A.V.W. Jackson & A. Yohannan, *A catalogue of the collection of Persian manuscripts including some Turkish and Arabic presented to the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, 71-79, no. 10; M.S. Dimand, "Dated specimens of Mohammedan art in the Metropolitan Museum of Art", 224-28; John Seyller, "The inspection and valuation of manuscripts", 281-82, fig. 17 (detail of colophon f. 56v).

³¹ RAS Morley 239, f. 362v.

text. Several beaters on horseback and foot surround the assiduous hunter as he unleashes an arrow and pins the hoof of an onager to its ear.³² However, the interpretation of the scene in Mughal illustrations of the subject is often simplified.

Bahram is shown demonstrating his prowess (fig. 3) in a stray leaf from a sub-imperial Mughal copy of the *Shahnama*, now mounted in an album dated 1608.³³ He is shown having just dispatched an arrow at a male blackbuck and successfully transfixing its hind leg to its ear. In the background a fleeing doe has gained a pair of antlers represented by a pair of arrows—to transform it into a male, while in the foreground a male buck has lost its horns. Azada, mounted on a horse with her harp in hand, is represented to the upper left although she resembles a young man in this picture. The ‘break-line verse’ (the line immediately preceding the illustration) concerns the concluding feat; the two mounted riders and the blackbuck with its hoof pinned to its ear appear in the same picture plane—thereby making them the focus of the illustration.³⁴

Another page of sub-imperial quality from a *Khamsa* of Nizami dated 1618 in the Salar Jung Museum (fig. 4) clearly borrows from the compositional vocabulary of the preceding *Shahnama* illustration.

Both pages contain eight verses of the respective texts written in four columns of two lines each. The male and female blackbuck are almost mirror images from the *Shahnama* illustration (fig. 3), except that their positions have been altered within the composition. Bahram Gur and Fitna are also similarly placed, although Fitna appears at the horizon and is comparatively more feminine. The tree in the background of the Weiner painting is transposed to the foreground of the Salar Jung folio. Although the scene reproduced is from the *Shahnama* (depicting the first two feats), the accompanying text is from the episode of Bahram Gur and Fitna in Nizami’s *Haft Paikar*. The text on the page describes Bahram’s

³² Metropolitan Museum of Art (MET), Gift of Alexander Cochran, 13.228.13, f. 23v.

³³ B, VII, 273, vs. 190-197. This illustration is not included in the section entitled ‘Bahram Gur hunts with Azadeh’ in Norgren & Davis, *Preliminary index*.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, break-line verse, v. 193. Note that the last two verses below the painting are in reverse order and depart in several minor ways from the standard text, which should be (B, vs. 196-197):

چنین گفت کای بی خرد چنگ زن چه بایست جستن بمن بر شکن
اگر کند بودی گشاد برم ازین زخم ننگی شدی گوهرم



Figure 3. 'Bahram Gur hunting with Azada', from a *Shahnama*, Mughal, from an album dated 1608, Doris Weiner, "Indian miniature painting", 1974, no. 45.



Figure 4. 'Bahram Gur hunting with Fitna', from a *Khamse* of Nizami, Mughal 1618, Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad, acc. no. 2161, fol. 49r.

skilful display of pinning the hoof and ear and Fitna's reproachful answer.³⁵ Although the intent of the epic and of the romance may differ, the fact that one may serve as a model for the other reflects the ideas shared by artists and poets. In turn, this practice of universal borrowing causes confusion in the case of paintings, as reflected by these two examples.

The episode of Bahram Gur hunting in the company of his slave girl is also illustrated (fig. 5, pl. 16) in a copy of the *Khamasa* of Nizami from the Keir Collection, London—a manuscript that was briefly mentioned earlier. Bahram Gur is shown riding a rearing dappled blue steed and with great ease has just delivered the masterful shot at Fitna's request. Meanwhile, she observes him with indifference from her piebald mount placed at the horizon near a tree of great size. Fitna wears a flowing veil rather than the *chaghatai* head-dress commonly seen in other paintings of the scene. Two retainers hurry alongside the king in the immediate foreground. The painting is attributed to the artist Mah Muhammad, whose name appears in the margin below.³⁶ The text inscribed in the panel above the painting relates to the feat performed at the request of the slave girl, whereas the verses written just below the scene communicate her response of 'practice makes perfect'.³⁷

A comparison between this manuscript and the later Dyson Perrins Nizami made for Akbar in 1595, now in the British Library (Or. 12208), reveals interesting differences in the illustrative cycle adopted in the later manuscript.³⁸ The Bahram Gur episode has either strayed from the later *Khamasa*, as 39 of its folios including five illustrations are in the Walters Art Gallery, or the scene was deliberately not illustrated. It has been suggested by Robert Skelton that the choice of illustrations in the Keir manuscript was possibly influenced by conventional Persian prototypes and predetermined by the early 16th-century scribe.³⁹

The incessant hunter is yet again seen pursuing his favourite quarry in a spirited composition (fig. 6, pl. 17) forming the left-hand page of a frontispiece (fol. 2r) from a late 16th-century manuscript of the *Shahnama*, sold at Sotheby's in 1988.⁴⁰ The volume comprises 309 leaves written in

³⁵ *Haft Paikar*, ed. Dastgirdi, 109–110, vs. 34–41. *The Haft Paykar*, tr. Meisami, 25, vs. 34–41.

³⁶ A painting from the V&A *Akbarnama* is also ascribed to the artist, IS 2-1896 50/117.

³⁷ *Haft Paikar*, 109, lines 8–12, 13–14; 110, line 1.

³⁸ For an overview of the British Library's Or. 12208, see Barbara Brend, *The Emperor Akbar's Khamasa of Nizami*.

³⁹ Skelton, "Arts of the book", 247.

⁴⁰ Sotheby's, London, 10 October 1988, lot 206.

four columns of 29 lines but lacks a colophon, as it does not contain the entire text.⁴¹ Furthermore, it is plausible that this manuscript entered the Mughal library at some point, as it bears several Mughal seals of ownership on folio 1r, some of which are illegible. One of the seals bears the inscription *I'timad Khan banda-yi Shahjahani*, which also appears in the colophon of the *Haft Paikar* discussed earlier, which is now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Another seal that appears on the page is inscribed with the name 'Inayat Khan.⁴² It contains 84 paintings that have been attributed to northwestern India and possibly Sind.

The composition (fig. 6) integrates several unrelated hunting scenes that occupy the foreground, middle and background of the painting. The scenes illustrated in the background are conceivably pictorial narratives related to Bahram's famed hunting exploits. In the far background, he is depicted chasing onagers in flight among swirling gold clouds, reminiscent of Turkman painting. Meanwhile, just below the representation of the protagonist is an over-painted figure astride a dappled blue mount—almost identical in detail and hue to the image of Bahram and his horse in the Keir painting (fig. 5). The scene to the left of the steep rocky projection recalls the image of the wild ass in the Keir painting and the shape of the rider's orange turban bears a resemblance to that of Bahram's in the Nizami painting. Both pictures, although stylistically quite different, share the same intense colour palette, which is distributed differently in the *Shahnama* painting. It seems likely that damaged sections of the *Shahnama* illustration were either restored or that some areas were just over-painted in Mughal India. While many Mughal elements are visible in this painting, the idiom is essentially an eclectic fusion of styles assimilated from Iran and India.⁴³

Often, in the absence of accompanying text on a painting, it is difficult to determine to which classical text the image belongs. A dispersed painting now mounted in an album from the Royal Library, Windsor Castle, presents such a problem.⁴⁴ Bahram is shown pinning the hind leg of a

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁴² "The position of *Bakhshi* of the army was given to I'timad Khan, who until then had held the post of Superintendent of the Royal Library to which 'Inayat Khan, son of Zafar Khan, was now appointed in his stead", *The Shah Jahan Nama*, ed. W. E. Begley and Z.A. Desai, 545-46.

⁴³ Another *Shahnama* attributed to India, dated to 1590 with 41 illustrations compares closely with this ms. It also appeared at a Sotheby's sale (19 October 1994, lot 120); it is also of sub-imperial quality and incorporates Turkman elements.

⁴⁴ Royal Library, Windsor Castle, RCIN 1005069.

male blackbuck to its ear with an arrow, as Azada with her harp in hand observes the scene with detachment from a distant viewpoint. Just below the wounded blackbuck two chitals flee in anticipation of the impending danger. A *nasta'liq* inscription above the picture reads: *Hakim Mirza Walad-i Babur Badshah*; however, the inscription is inaccurate, as it was perhaps added later in Awadh around 1775.⁴⁵ Hakim Mirza was Akbar's younger half brother and not Babur's son and he is without doubt not represented in the painting. Yet the illustration is hard to identify without any accompanying text. It is most likely a detached folio from a *Shahnama* manuscript, as several pictorial versions of the Bahram Gur scene only illustrate the final challenge, that is the pinning of the hind leg of a buck to its ear, although this is the only feat that is described in Nizami's version and the picture would thus perhaps more accurately illustrate the *Haft Paikar*.

This final feat has been discussed earlier in the context of the Juki painting, in which the artist has emphasised the concluding challenge. The retainers carrying the prince's hunting equipment and the man with the saluki in the foreground are not part of Firdausi's text, as Bahram and Azada were said to hunt alone. By contrast, elements such as the attendants in the foreground are mentioned in Nizami's version of the scene. Perhaps it could be an inaccurate depiction of Nizami's version as is seen in the Salar Jung leaf or that elements from Nizami's Bahram Gur episode were incorporated into the *Shahnama* illustration. Moreover, the man restraining the leaping saluki in the foreground recurs in several Mughal hunting scenes. This painting clearly suggests that artists illustrating classical Persian texts in India were conscious of the geographical change in that they exclusively depict animals indigenous to the subcontinent.

A folio exhibited at the Musée d'ethnographie, Neuchâtel in 1980 also depicts Bahram's final feat and was shown as a page from the *Khamisa* of Nizami. However its text shows it to be a stray leaf from an early 17th-century copy of the *Shahnama*.⁴⁶ The white hunting dog and retainer that feature in the foreground of the Windsor illustration also occur in this illustration. Like the Juki *Shahnama* and the Windsor page, the Neuchâtel illustration belongs to a group of *Shahnama* paintings that only depict Bahram's final feat.

⁴⁵ I am grateful to Robert Skelton for discussing the matter with me.

⁴⁶ See Robert Cran, 'Miniatures indiennes: Musée d'ethnographie, Neuchâtel, 29 juin au 31 décembre 1980'.

AMIR KHUSRAU'S *HASHT BIHISHT* ILLUSTRATIONS IN RELATION TO THE
SHAHNAMA

After Firdausi's *Shahnama* and Nizami's *Khamasa*, the *Khamasa* of Amir Khusrau composed between 1299 and 1302 for Sultan 'Ala' al-Din Khalji, was from the early 15th century one of the most frequently illustrated literary texts. Khusrau's *Hasht Bihisht* (Eight Paradises), written in 3,350 couplets, was the fifth and last poem of his *Khamasa*. It was written in accepted imitation of Nizami's *Haft Paikar*, employing the same metre as that of its prototype. Like its predecessor, the *Hasht Bihisht* is also based on the romantic adventures and hunting exploits of Bahram Gur. In his historical *masnavi*, the *Qiran al-sa'dain* (The Conjunction of the two Auspicious Stars),⁴⁷ Khusrau alludes to Nizami as his source and writes:

With this alphabet which may amuse children, I have written an imitation of a great master's work. If it is not sweet, there is music in it, if there is no life in it, there is a skeleton... From his birth-place Ganja he scattered out the five treasures, and with those five I wanted to match my own strength... so that the wise ones may say to me: Bravo! Thou worthy pupil of Nizami.⁴⁸

The story of Bahram in the *Hasht Bihisht* differs again from Nizami's; the girl's name becomes Dilaram (heart's ease), and her challenge is the same as the first part of Azada's challenge in the *Shahnama* (see Appendix A). Her response, that this is magic and not a skill, enrages Bahram who throws her from her mount and abandons her. After wandering for days she meets a man who is a skilled musician and teaches her the twelve musical modes, of which four have the ability to induce laughter, sleep, alertness or weeping. Bahram then comes to hear of a woman who has the aptitude to charm the birds and beasts with her melodies: thus he sets out to witness this wonderful feat and is reunited with her.⁴⁹

Amir Khusrau was considered to be one of the greatest poets of the Indian subcontinent and was particularly admired by the Mughals. 'Khusrau of Hind' is referred to as 'the admired Lord of Lords of speech's kingdoms' in the *Akbarnama*, thus affirming his popularity at the Mughal

⁴⁷ This lengthy *masnavi* was completed in 1289 at the request of Sultan Kay Qubad. The poem addresses the quarrel and reconciliation of Sultan Kay Qubad with his father, Nasir al-Din, the Sultan of Bengal.

⁴⁸ Amir Khusrau Dihlavi, *Qiran al-sa'dain*, 188. For the quotation see Mohammad Wahid Mirza, *The life and works of Amir Khusrau*, 191-92.

⁴⁹ Amir Khusrau Dihlavi, *Hasht Bihisht-i Amir Khusrau*, 30-39; Gabbay, "Love gone wrong", 686-92.

court.⁵⁰ An imperial illustrated copy of his *Khamasa* now in the Walters Art Gallery was commissioned by Akbar and completed at Lahore between 1597 and 1598. Five illustrations from this manuscript are now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.⁵¹ John Seyller affirms that the episode concerning this paper is not illustrated, or is perhaps missing from this particular copy of the manuscript. The fact that this scene is also missing from the Dyson Perrins Nizami of 1595 suggests that the manuscripts were most likely planned with miniature cycles that departed from conventional Persian prototypes, perhaps to emphasise the independent character of Akbar's painting studio.

However, in 1996 a fragmentary Mughal *Khamasa* of lesser quality appeared at a Bonhams sale in London.⁵² It has not acquired any annotations or librarian seals, thereby making it difficult to ascertain the patron of the manuscript. It comprises 146 folios, written in four columns of 19 lines of *nasta'liq*, by Husain ibn Haidar ibn Muhammad Kashmiri. The manuscript has a colophon, which reveals a date of 1600 and is illustrated with six full-page paintings, including the episode of Bahram Gur hunting in the company of Dilaram.

The vividly rendered scene from the *Hasht Bihisht* (fig. 7) draws attention to Bahram and his dark horse cantering in pursuit of quarry, comprised mainly of blackbuck. The legendary hunter has just completed his task of emasculating a male blackbuck and piercing the head of a fleeing doe with arrows.

He looks back and waves his right hand in a manner seeking the approval of Dilaram, who follows him on a camel. The familiar white dog accompanied by its attendant is also shown above the text panel in the foreground of this painting. The text inscribed on the painting in two rows of four columns refers to the later part of the story and Dilaram's reaction to the adept demonstration.⁵³ This painting is very similar in composition and hue to an illustration of Bahram Gur hunting with Azada from a *Shahnama* illustrated with 17 paintings, now in Berlin.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ *Akbarnama*, 456.

⁵¹ John Seyller, "Pearls of the Parrot of India: The Walters Art Museum *Khamasa* of Amir Khusrau of Delhi". Also see Barbara Brend, "Akbar's *Khamseh* of Amir Khusrau Dihlavi—a reconstruction of the cycle of illustration", 281–315.

⁵² Bonhams, *Oriental & European rugs & carpets & Islamic works of art*, 24 April 1996, lot 481.

⁵³ *Hasht Bihisht*, 32, lines 7–14.

⁵⁴ Staatsbibliothek, Ms. or. fol. 172, f. 493v.



Figure 7. 'Bahram Gur displays his hunting skills to Dilaram', from a *Khamsa* of Amir Khusrau, sub-imperial Mughal 1600, Bonhams, 24 April 1996, lot 481, fol. 107r.



Figure 8. 'Bahram Gur hunting with Azada', from a *Shahnama*, sub-imperial Mughal, c. 1600, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, Ms. or. fol. 172, fol. 493v.

However, the Berlin page (fig. 8) combines a lion hunt in the foreground with the composition of the *Hasht Bihisht* painting (fig. 7) to which is added a doe with its hind leg pinned to its ear—a detail consciously excluded from the *Hasht Bihisht* illustration.

In both paintings, anxious antelope endeavour to escape the confines of the right-side of the frame. The receding landscape seen in the Bonhams painting, with its high viewpoint and rocky projections revealing precari-

ously perched animals amongst foliage, is also mirrored in the *Shahnama* illustration. An unusual feature of both paintings is the exaggerated blackish shading around the figures and animals that further accentuates their outlines against the verdant background.⁵⁵ Owing to their relative similarity and shared colour palette, it is plausible that these paintings were produced in the same workshop, possibly by the same Mughal artist, who fell short of imperial standards. Although the *Hasht Bihisht* was composed in acknowledged imitation of Nizami's *Haft Paikar*, pictorial representations of the scene as well as the textual account, have a closer affinity to Bahram's initial challenge of transforming a male into a female and female into a male in the *Shahnama*.

Another picture that borrows from the pictorial repertoire of the previous two paintings is from an early 17th-century sub-imperial *Shahnama* in the British Library.⁵⁶ The composition discloses two hunting scenes separated by a rocky outcrop; regrettably, however, most of the painting's surface has become indistinct by flaking. The episode of Bahram and Azada occurs to the left in the immediate foreground. The couple are depicted astride separate mounts—hers a camel, his a chestnut coloured horse. A pair of blackbuck have just been subjected to the brutal sex-change and they attempt to escape from the mighty hunter, while just below a doe is seen with its hoof fastened to its ear. An unrelated lion hunt is depicted to the right, immediately above the spectacular hunting feats. Such composite hunting depictions are often integrated into the episode of Bahram Gur and his slave girl.⁵⁷

Yet another representation of the scene from Amir Khusrau's text is illustrated by the artist Nadim (fig. 9), and shows Bahram unleashing an arrow at a group of blackbuck in flight. The illustration is a detached leaf from a copy of a *Khamsa* now in Berlin,⁵⁸ a manuscript that was refur-

⁵⁵ Barbara Brend asserts that the artist Husain Naqqash who worked on the right-hand page of 'Husayn Quli presenting prisoners' from the V&A *Akbarnama*, IS 2-1896 113/117, is the artist responsible for the illustrations of the Bonham manuscript; Brend, *Perspectives on Persian painting: Illustrations to Amir Khusrau's Khamsah*, 239. However, the superior quality and accentuated shading in the *Akbarnama* painting, executed in a different manner, suggest a different artist.

⁵⁶ London, British Library (BL), Add. 6609, f. 446r.

⁵⁷ See for example Sotheby's, 10 October 1988, lot 206, f. 2r (fig. 7 in this chapter); Spink, 17 October 1995, no. 33; St Petersburg, National Library of Russia (NLR), PNS 382, f. 464r; Princeton University Library, Islamic MSS, Third Series, no. 310, f. 329v; Bodleian Library, Oxford, Dep. b. 5, f. 332r.

⁵⁸ Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin-Preussischer Kulturbesitz Orientabteilung, or. fol. 1278, ff. 225, written in 21 lines of nasta'liq; only seven of the 21 illustrations that embellished



Figure 9. 'Bahram Gur displays his prowess to Dilaram', by Nadim, a detached folio from the Berlin *Khamsa* of Amir Khusrau, Mughal 1610, British Museum, London, BM 1920. 9-17-0258.

bished in the workshop of the leading sub-imperial patron, 'Abd al-Rahim Khan-i Khanan, commander-in-chief of the Mughal armies and son of

the manuscript are in place. The paintings are catalogued in Stchoukine *et al.*, *Illuminierte Islamische Handschriften*, 163-64. The flyleaf, f. 1r, reveals an inscription by the emperor Shah Jahan and also bears a seal of Aurangzib.

Bairam Khan. The author of the *Ma'asir-i umara* asserts that, "the *Khan-i Khanan's* court which was the centre of the masters of all branches of art and letters, was reminiscent of the days of Sultan Husain Mirza and Mir 'Ali Shir of Herat." The *Ma'asir-i Rahami* also mentions that the Khan-i Khanan had in his employment several painters, calligraphers, illuminators and gilders.⁵⁹ The *Khamisa* was copied in a Herat style and has been dated to c. 1500 by John Seyller on the basis of the illumination and an inscription in the central cartouche, as it lacks a colophon.⁶⁰ There is, however, a lengthy inscription on the flyleaf by 'Abd al-Rahim, describing how his librarian Mir Taqi gradually acquired parts of the manuscript in 1603-4 in Gujarat.⁶¹ He asserts that the text was copied by Sultan 'Ali and illustrated by Bihzad. Furthermore, he remarks that, "...The paintings that had fallen out were [ordered to be] restored, and those other folios... which had fallen out, Muhammad Mu'min was ordered to rewrite. The binding was tooled in gold and the borders were embellished. The work was done in ten or eleven years so that it reached completion in the year 1026/1617. Written by 'Abd al-Rahim son of Muhammad Bairam..."⁶²

A vividly conceived hunt from the *Hasht Bihisht* (fig. 9) shows Bahram Gur displaying his prowess before Dilaram.⁶³ Bahram has pierced a female in such a way that she appears as a horned male, while the male has lost his antlers. The three blackbuck in flight extend beyond the margin, which is an attribute of Persian painting, making it likely that the earlier Persian composition was over-painted and extended in the Khan-i Khanan's studio. Owing to its Persian origin certain compositional elements in this painting are similar to those seen in a detail from a *Khamisa* of Nizami dated 1539-43 in the British Library (Or. 2265) or a similar prototype. The detail of Dilaram with her harp astride a piebald mount, restrained by a vigilant groom, is comparable with the same compositional group seen in the Nizami painting.⁶⁴ However, the girl is not mentioned playing a harp in Amir Khusrau's text, thereby suggesting that artists working on the illustrations were most likely incorporating ele-

⁵⁹ For the quotation see M. Mahfuzul Haq, "The Khan-i-Khanan and his painters, illuminators, and calligraphists", 623.

⁶⁰ Seyller, *Workshop and patron in Mughal India*, 276.

⁶¹ For a general discussion of this manuscript see Seyller *Workshop and patron*, 273-83 and Brend, *Perspectives on Persian painting*, 192-94.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 329.

⁶³ *Hasht Bihisht*, 32, lines 6-8.

⁶⁴ See 'Bahram Gur hunts in the company of Fitna', from a *Khamisa* of Nizami, Tabriz, 1539-43, BL, Or. 2265, f. 211r. Illustrated in Stuart C. Welch, *Royal Persian manuscripts*, 23.

ments from other classical texts. The image also shares details with another painting attributed to Aqa Mirak from the same British Library Nizami, depicting Nushirvan listening to the owls on the ruined palace. The figure of Nushirvan appears in the background of the Nadim painting, and a figure similar to his vizier mounted on a mule appears behind Bahram in the detached Berlin page. The meandering stream that emanates from a rock above is also common to both paintings.⁶⁵ The artist Nadim is mentioned as one of the '*khassa khail*' by the author of the *Ma'asir-i Rahimi*. Moreover, Nihavandi writes that, "He was so skilled in drawing and painting, that since the days of Mani and Bihzad, none has been born who can rival him. He acquired this proficiency in the library, and in the service, of ... the exalted *Khan-i Khanan* ...".⁶⁶

A painting by Qasim⁶⁷ from a sub-imperial Mughal *Shahnama* dated 1616 and illustrated with 89 paintings was also partially refurbished in the Khan-i Khanan's workshop.⁶⁸ An inscription on folio 2r reveals that the manuscript was presented to Ilahvirdi Chela at the order of the emperor Jahangir on 23 November 1613, which in due course was given to his brother Khwaja Muhammad Rashid.⁶⁹ This manuscript also incorporates the illustration of Bahram Gur displaying his skills with heroic ease in the presence of Azada.

Instead of observing the feat from a distance, Azada with her harp rides alongside Bahram. The painting is comparable with the British Museum *Hasht Bihisht* page (fig. 9) for several reasons. First, the figure of Bahram in the *Shahnama* page, which was executed on a blank folio, con-

⁶⁵ See Nushirvan listening to the owls, from a *Khamse* of Nizami, Tabriz, 1539-43, BL, Or. 2265, f. 15v. Illustrated in Welch, *Royal Persian manuscripts*, pl. 19.

⁶⁶ 'Abd al-Baqi Nihavandi, *Ma'asir-i Rahimi*, Asiatic Society of Bengal, Ms. D. 269, f. 753r.

⁶⁷ BL, Add. 5600, f. 408v.

⁶⁸ According to Seyller, "*Workshop and patron*", 263, 289, n. 39. Folio 274r gives the name of the artist Shamal and bears a date 1616. The reworking of several paintings from this ms. is evident from the outlines of the original Persian compositions visible on the reverse of ff. 116v, 183v, 211v and 314v. Fresh compositions were added on 35 blank folios added to the ms., including the illustration that concerns this paper.

⁶⁹ Ilahvirdi Chela is a courtier who is known to have served under Jahangir and Shah Jahan. The fact that several of these illustrated classical texts made their way into the workshop of a sub-imperial patron confirms Jahangir's preoccupation with the illustration of other topics such as animal studies, European subjects and paintings symbolic of his kingship rather than illustrated narratives. See f. 2r of this manuscript for information pertaining to its provenance. For a discussion of this *Shahnama* (BL, Add. 5600), see Seyller *Workshop and patron*, 263-73, fig. 178 [for the flyleaf inscription] and Appendix B, 328, for a translation of the notes. Also see Losty, *The art of the book in India*, 122-23.

ceivably derives from his representation in the *Hasht Bihisht* illustration. Secondly, the challenge illustrated in both pictures is similar and the quarry is also the same. The alarmed blackbuck in both paintings attempt to flee out of the picture frame, followed by the horse and rider.

Even though Amir Khusrau wrote his *Khamisa* in imitation of Nizami's work, illustrations of his version of the Bahram Gur and slave girl story bear a stronger visual affinity to depictions of the episode in Firdausi's epic. As mentioned earlier, this is also because his narrative is based on the first two feats and not the third alluded to in Firdausi's text. The presence of the harp-playing slave girl seen in both *Hasht Bihisht* illustrations (figs. 7, 9) is not mentioned in Amir Khusrau's text—a detail that was perhaps borrowed from the depiction of Bahram Gur hunting in the company of Azada in the *Shahnama*. Dilaram becomes an adept musician in the second half of Amir Khusrau's story—acquiring the ability to mesmerise animals in the wilderness with the sound of music.

Nizami alters the brutal ending of Firdausi's story, by introducing a tale of a woman who achieves physical prowess by carrying an ox up a flight of 40 stairs to impress Bahram Gur. By contrast, Amir Khusrau further refines the concluding section of the story by replacing the image of a muscular woman, suggestive of physical strength by endowing the female protagonist with a spiritually superior skill to that of the king: captivating gazelle with the sound of the harp is a far subtler and superior skill to that of the brutal transformation of a female to male and a male to female with arrows.⁷⁰

THE ASSOCIATION OF ROYALTY WITH THE MIGHTY HUNTER BAHRAM GUR

The portrayal of rulers slaying perilous beasts as a demonstration of kingly prowess can be traced back to the relief carvings of ancient Assyria and Sasanian Iran. Kings were often compared with the most fêted hunters of the past. In regions where Persian literature flourished, court poetry was an important means of extolling a ruler's virtues, his strength, skill and sense of justice. Court poets often likened the skills of their patrons to those of the legendary hunter/warrior Rustam, or Bahram Gur who was famed for confronting lions (or elephants)⁷¹ with his bare hands. This practice of comparing patrons with the celebrated heroes of the past was

⁷⁰ See also Gabbay, "Love gone wrong", 691.

⁷¹ *A'in-i Akbari*, III, 374; see above, n. 24.

also employed by artists and chroniclers in Mughal India. One such example is in an early 17th-century Mughal painting recently seen on the art market, depicting a royal figure dressed as the hero Rustam hunting a lion.⁷² Such analogies are also drawn in historical texts; in the *Tarikh-i Akbari*, 'Arif Qandahari associates the emperor Akbar's hunting dexterity with that of Bahram Gur's. He writes that during a hunt the emperor emptied the land of wild asses and deer, which brought amazement and joy to the soul of Bahram Gur.⁷³

The context of the following early 17th-century picture (fig. 10, pl. 18) is of a slightly obscure nature. The occasion illustrated is clearly from the *Khamasa* of Nizami and portrays Bahram Gur hunting onagers in Fitna's presence. However, an inscription beside the princely figure's elbow identifies him as Khusrau. It is possible that the emperor Jahangir's eldest son and rival to the throne, prince Khusrau, who had a considerably following, has been likened to the hero Bahram Gur, as adroitness in matters of the hunt was an essential virtue associated with kingship. On comparing the detail of the face of the princely figure with a detail from a portrait of Khusrau in a painting now in Cincinnati, one can see a slight resemblance;⁷⁴ however, it is more likely that the attribution was added later. The pun on the double meaning of *gur*, both 'onager' and 'grave', provides a recurrent motif throughout the *Haft Paikar*. Nizami writes:⁷⁵

شاه از آن گور بر تافت ستور چون توان تاقن عنان از گور

He chased that gur, turned not aside; for how can one the grave avoid?⁷⁶

The verse suggests that the prince who hunts the wild ass is consequently hunted by the grave. This is also symbolised by the pictorial representation of Bahram hunting the '*gur*' just as Khusrau was sent to the grave at an early age by his younger brother Khurram (Shah Jahan)—the attribution seems quite appropriate.⁷⁷

⁷² See Christie's London, 7 October 2008, lot 226.

⁷³ Muhammad 'Arif Qandahari, *Tarikh-i Akbari*, tr. Tasneem Ahmed, 129.

⁷⁴ The portrait of a figure standing behind Akbar in an illustration entitled, 'Akbar in old age', dated c. 1605, by Manohar compares with the depiction in this painting. Cincinnati Museum of Art, Gift of John J. Emery, 1950.289a; see Stuart Cary Welch, *India: Art and culture 1300-1900*, 181.

⁷⁵ *Haft Paikar*, 73, line 10.

⁷⁶ Meisami, *Haft Paykar*, 48, line 23.

⁷⁷ As a result of Salim's [later emperor Jahangir] erratic behaviour, his eldest son Khusrau was considered as a successor to Akbar. The last years of Akbar's reign were consumed by the rivalry between son and grandson. Khusrau rebelled against his father

Lastly, Bahram Gur is identified by an inscription as the mighty hunter in another painting signed by the artist 'Ali Quli and dated 1616.⁷⁸ The painting is perhaps a detached folio from a *Shahnama*, as the princely hunter has pierced the antler of a tumbling blackbuck while an arrow intended for a doe's head seems to miss. The harp-player is not included in the scene and is replaced by beaters who surround the prince during his skilful demonstration. It is evident that Mughal artists thus acknowledged the prowess of the celebrated hunter, who eventually became completely associated with hunting and was easily distinguished by his specific feats. These achievements, conveyed pictorially and in writing, often highlight a ruler's accomplishment in warfare and thereby his ability to protect his domain. Furthermore, it can be plausibly suggested that the hunt was used as a means to articulate, both pictorially and in writing, the plots of epics and romances, while also creating a context in which to place a ruler who was to be the central focus of the narrative.

From the illustrations examined in the course of this chapter one can conclude that although the episode of Bahram Gur and Azada in the *Shahnama* is noted for its brevity, its later pictorial depiction is significantly more complex. Despite the fact that Amir Khusrau wrote his version of the story in imitation of Nizami, the illustrations and text correlating to this particular episode bear a greater visual and written similarity to the first part of Bahram's challenge mentioned in the *Shahnama*. By contrast, the final feat of pinning the hoof of a gazelle to its ear in the *Shahnama* is depicted in illustrations from the *Haft Paikar*, with the exception that the animal is an onager rather than a gazelle. The choice of an onager by Nizami in his version of the narrative significantly changes the context of the episode.⁷⁹ Moreover, it can be suggested that representations of this scene from the *Shahnama* often served as a visual source

when he ascended the throne and spent a year in chains as a result of his rebellion. The prince was also partially blinded and had been imprisoned for nearly 13 years at his father's court. Khurram (later Shah Jahan) considered his younger brother as his main rival. Khusrau was said to have died in 1622 of colic pains—however it is said that he was probably poisoned by Khurram. See *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, trans. Alexander Rogers, ed. Henry Beveridge, I, 62-68, 70-72, 122, 130; II, 107, 228.

⁷⁸ For the illustration see Linda York Leach, *Mughal and other Indian paintings from the Chester Beatty Library*, II, 588. Library No. 11A.23.

⁷⁹ Gabbay, "Love gone wrong", 685. However, artists illustrating the episode from the *Shahnama*, sometimes erroneously depicted an onager in place of a gazelle—a detail borrowed from Nizami's adaptation of the story. One such error is seen in Ibrahim Sultan's *Shahnama* (Ouseley Add. 176), in the Bodleian Library; cf. Firuza Abdullaeva & Charles Melville, *The Persian Book of Kings: Ibrahim Sultan's Shahnama*, 119, fig. 82.

for illustrations to both Nizami and Amir Khusrau's texts, which consequently causes difficulties of recognition in the case of detached paintings without inscribed text. One such minor deviation occurs in illustrations from the *Hasht Bihisht*, as Dilaram is often shown holding a harp—a detail incorporated from Firdausi's text, as Amir Khusrau does not mention the slave girl taking a musical instrument to the hunting ground and she acquires musical skills in the second half of the story. An interesting point to note is that although Persian prototypes were available for artists in Mughal India to emulate, they consciously chose to illustrate animals indigenous to the Indian subcontinent.

Moreover, these images also bring to light the age-old association of animal attraction to music, which is most aptly described by Amir Khusrau in the narrative poem the *Nuh Sipihr* (Nine Heavens), written in 1318 and dedicated to the young sultan Mubarak Shah.⁸⁰ The *masnavi* is divided into nine chapters written in differing poetic metres, each corresponding to the seven planets, the moon and the sun. The third *sipihr* includes a comprehensive account of the diversity of Indian culture and the poet's contentions for the superiority of India in relation to the Muslim world.⁸¹ His ninth argument in this chapter of the *masnavi* pertains to the mesmerising effect of Indian music on the hunter's prey. He writes:⁸²

تیر خورد آهوی صحرا بجگر	حجت نه آنست که از نغمه تر
جان دهد از زخمه آن هم بزمان	دوخته زمزمه بی تیر و کمان

My ninth argument is that at the sound of sweet music, the wild deer is fatally wounded by the arrow
It is pierced by the sound, not by arrow and bow; thus wounded it lays down its life at once.

⁸⁰ I am grateful to Sunil Sharma for this reference. Anecdotes of animal attraction to music are frequent in the Western literary and artistic tradition. The most frequently encountered of these myths is that of Orpheus. The Thracian poet was said to have acquired his lyre from Apollo who according to Euripides struck up tunes that made the lions and lynxes harmless. Apollo gave the lyre to Orpheus so that he could continue the task of soothing the savage beasts. Michael Hicks, "Soothing the savage beast: A note on animals and music", 47-48. For the various accounts see, Robert Graves, *The Greek myths*, I, 111-14. For a discussion of Orpheus at the Mughal Court see, Ebba Koch, *Shah Jahan and Orpheus: The Pietre Dure decoration*.

⁸¹ Amir Khusrau, *The Nuh Sipihr of Amir Khusraw*, 147-202; see also Sunil Sharma, *Amir Khusraw: The poet of the Sultans and Sufis*, 84-87.

⁸² *Nuh Sipihr*, 171, v. 7, 172, v. 1.

In the following verses, Amir Khusrau articulates the magical effect and power of music over the animal kingdom, which he asserts is a skill superior to that of hunting with bow and arrow. He further maintains that deer are made senseless and brought to the verge of death by the sound of music.⁸³ Furthermore, Nizami also elucidates the relationship between music and hunting in the *Haft Paikar* when he refers to the harp as Fitna's weapon on which she struck up tunes whilst the king shot game.⁸⁴ Thus indeed, the illustrations not only illuminate Bahram's famed exploits, but also allude to the contribution of his companion, the harp-playing slave girl whose enchanting melodies perhaps largely aided the celebrated hunter in these marvellous feats of hunting dexterity.

APPENDIX

A COMPARATIVE BREAKDOWN AND A LIST OF KNOWN LATE SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY MUGHAL ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE EPISODE FROM ALL THREE TEXTS

<i>Classical Text</i>	<i>Royal Hunter</i>	<i>Accompanied by</i>	<i>Feat Performed</i>
Firdausi's <i>Shahnama</i> (c. 1010) (34 verses)	Bahram Gur astride a dromedary	Azada from Rum	Three feats demonstrated. Firstly, a female gazelle is changed into a male. Secondly the male is transformed into a female. Lastly the hoof of the latter is pinned to the ear.
1. MET, 13.228.22 (<i>final feat</i>)	hunts male and		
2. BL, Add. 5600 (<i>1st feat</i>)	female gazelle		
3. BL, Add. 6609 (<i>2nd & final feat</i>)	(or blackbuck)		
4. Musée d'art et d'Histoire, Ms. 1971-107/403.			
5. Staatbibliothek zu Berlin, Ms. or. fol. 172.			
6. Doris Weiner, 1974, no.45.			
7. RL, Windsor, RCIN 1005069			
8. Private Collection, Geneva			
9. Francesca Galloway London			
10. CB Dublin, 11A.23			

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 172.

⁸⁴ *Haft Paikar*, 108, line 10.

<i>Classical Text</i>	<i>Royal Hunter</i>	<i>Accompanied by</i>	<i>Feat Performed</i>
Nizami's <i>Haft Paikar</i> (1197) (102 verses) 1. Keir Collection London 2. Private Collection London 3. Salar Jung Museum, Acc.2161 4. Pierpont Morgan Library, M. 445.	Bahram Gur astride a chestnut horse hunts a wild ass (onager)	Fitna from Chin	One feat demonstrated. The hoof of a wild ass is transfixed to its ear with a single arrow. Is based on the second half of the challenge specified in Firdausi's text .
Amir Khusrāu's <i>Hasht Bihisht</i> (1301-2) (156 verses) 1. Bonhams London, 24-4-96, Lot 481. 2. BM, 1920.9-17-0258	Bahram Gur astride a chestnut horse hunts a male and female gazelle (or blackbuck)	Dilaram from Chin	Two feats demonstrated. Is challenged to cause a male gazelle to become a female and a female a male. Is based on the two initial challenges specified in Firdausi's text.

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THE SAMARQAND *SHAHNAMAS* IN THE CONTEXT OF DYNASTIC CHANGE*

Karin Ruehrdanz

Much in contrast to what happened at other places in the Persianate world, illustrated *Shahnamas* obviously did not appeal to the Shaibanids. In the first half of the 16th century we may still trace this back—in part—to the Herat tradition with its lack of enthusiasm for the *Shahnama*.¹ Surely, however, this was not the only reason, for this attitude lingered on.² Political rivalry and military clashes with the Safavids did not prevent other dynasties from having illustrated *Shahnama* manuscripts imported and produced, if not for the ruler, at least for top bureaucrats and military leaders. It may be suggested that it was the specific system of power sharing in the Shaibanid realm and its ideological impact that suppressed interest in the *Shahnama*.³ Not so much the fact itself that power was distributed among the ruling clan and the khan only accepted as ‘*primus inter pares*’ led to the neglect of the epic, but more so the absence of the idea of centralised rule executed by a divinely ordained king.⁴

It may, therefore, not be incidental that the only extant complete illustrated *Shahnama* of Shaibanid provenance⁵ was made for ‘Abd-Allah

* The author would like to thank the following libraries and collections for the permission to study their manuscripts and publish some illustrations from relevant manuscripts: Ancient India and Iran Trust, Cambridge; Chester Beatty Library, Dublin; British Library, London; Punjab University Library, Lahore; Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna; Princeton University Libraries, Princeton NJ; National Library of Russia, St. Petersburg; Oriental Institute of the Uzbek Academy of Sciences, Tashkent.

¹ Karin Rühdanz, “Zu Rolle und Funktion illustrierter *Shāhnāmeh*-Handschriften”, 81–82.

² As to be expected, it reflects a general lack of interest in this text. A check of the 11 volumes of the catalogue of the manuscript collection at the Oriental Institute at Tashkent discovered a very small number of copies only, see Aleksandr Semenov, ed. *Sobranie vostochnykh rukopisei*, II, 19–24, nos. 749–58; Aleksandr Semenov & D. Voronovskii, ed. *Sobranie vostochnykh rukopisei*, VIII, 141–44, nos. 5714–19; Asom Urumbaev & Liliia Epifanova, ed. *Sobranie vostochnykh rukopisei*, IX, 75–79, no. 6091.

³ Robert McChesney, “Central Asia vi”, 176–77.

⁴ For the lack of understanding of the idea of centralised power, see Maria Szuppe, “Looking across the frontier”.

⁵ Topkapı Saray Museum (TSMK), Istanbul, H. 1488, dated Muharram 972/August 1564, copied by Muhammad Baqi al-katib for the library of ‘Abd-Allah Khan. It contains

Khan, an ambitious member of the clan who fought hard to establish a more centralised rule in Central Asia.⁶ As the manuscript ended up in Ottoman hands, it cannot be excluded, however, that—knowing the predilection for illustrated *Shahnamas* at other courts—it was specially made with the intention of being presented at Istanbul by an embassy negotiating Ottoman help against the Safavids.⁷ The courtly initiative had a faint echo only. As dispersed leaves show, there must have been one other illustrated manuscript made about the same time.⁸ Two of those leaves with miniatures are at the Royal Ontario Museum (see fig. 1).⁹ This modest offshoot of ‘Abd-Allah’s commission reminds us that the illustrated *Shahnama* manuscript excited some very limited interest in Shaibanid Central Asia. However, compared with the number of illustrated copies preserved of works by Jami and Sa’di, the illustration of the *Shahnama* was obviously neglected.

It is, then, the contrast with the past that first makes a group of illustrated *Shahnama* manuscripts produced within a short period of time at the beginning of the 17th century interesting. Even with only seven copies traced we can talk about an ‘outburst’ compared with Shaibanid rule. Secondly, five of these manuscripts explicitly mention their being copied in Samarqand, a city not known in previous decades as a place producing illustrated manuscripts. Since the earliest date, 1600, roughly coincides with the coming to power of the Janids, who had their main court at Samarqand for a short while, it would make sense to connect this surge with the arrival of the new dynasty. While the fact should be taken into account, it cannot be the whole story, because none of those manuscripts was made for a Janid, as far as we know.

Let us first review the manuscripts in order of their date:

28 miniatures, see Güner Inal, “Topkapı Sarayı Koleksiyonundaki Sultani Bir Özbek Şehnamesi”.

⁶ Having taken Bukhara in 1561, he exercised power in the name of his father and step by step established his supremacy over the Shaibanid clan during the years to follow, see Audrey Burton, *The Bukharans*, 15–45.

⁷ See Inal, “Topkapı Sarayı Koleksiyonundaki Sultani”, 308 (323). Intensive contacts around 1554–56, when the Ottomans sent people and canons, see Josef v. Hammer, *Geschichte des Osmanischen Reiches*, III, 351–54, were sporadically renewed during the following decades.

⁸ Several leaves are in the Keir Collection, see Basil Robinson, *Islamic Painting*, 197–98, III.337–41.

⁹ ROM, 970.268.1 and 2. For 970.268.2, see John Vollmer, Edward Keall & Evelyn Nagai-Berthrong, *Silk Roads, China Ships*, 8. The written surface on both folios has the same size as that of the leaves in the Keir Collection.



Figure 1. 'Isfandiyar fighting a dragon'. Page from a manuscript of the *Shahnama*, Bukhara, c. 1570, Royal Ontario Museum Toronto, 970.268.1 (Courtesy of the Royal Ontario Museum. Photo Credit: Brian Boyle, © ROM).

1. British Library (BL) Ms. I.O. Islamic 301, dated 10 Sha'ban 1008/25 February 1600, containing 24 illustrations, one of them a double-page miniature.¹⁰ According to the colophon, the manuscript was written by

¹⁰ Hermann Ethé, *Catalogue of Persian manuscripts*, col. 552, no. 873; Basil Robinson, *Persian paintings in the India Office Library*, 188-89, nos. 929-52; see also the website of the *Shahnama Project*: <http://shahnama.caret.cam.ac.uk> (hereafter SNP).

Adina Bukhari¹¹ at Samarqand at *ku-yi Malaqand*.¹² The illustrations reveal connections with the debased Bukhara style of the last decade of the 16th century as well as elements deriving from Khurasan style.¹³ Some of the manuscript's miniatures seem to be more influenced by Khurasani treatment of the line of the hills and background colours. Others show this influence in figure painting with slender, often long-necked figures, and in the display of body armour. However, only one of the two painters (Robinson's painter B) was significantly influenced by Khurasan models, and even he often returned to small Bukharan figures (fig. 2, pl. 19).

2. Less than eight months later, 30 Rabi' I, 1009/8 October 1600, the same calligrapher completed another *Shahnama* copy, now at the Punjab University Library, Lahore (O-16/7249).¹⁴ It contains 14 illustrations. Not surprisingly, Adina katib-i Bukhari was still working at Samarqand *dar ku-yi Malaqand*. The hardly impressive text illustrations are close to Bukhara painting of the turn of the century and were obviously executed by one of the painters (Robinson's painter A) who worked on the BL/I.O. ms.¹⁵

3. Princeton University Libraries 59 G, dated end Safar 1009/September 1601.¹⁶ Although several of the 37 illustrations are of Central Asian origin,¹⁷

¹¹ Besides the *Shahnama* manuscripts mentioned in this paper, Adina's name (but not the place) appears in one other manuscript only; this is a copy of Muhyi-yi Lari's *Futuh al-Haramain*, dated 1003/1595, now ms. 684 of the Academy of Sciences of Tadzhikistan, see Abdulgani Mirzoev & Aleksandr Boldyrev, *Katalog vostochnykh rukopisei*, I, 213, no. 210.

¹² Suggested reading, referring to the region Malakand in today's North Western Pakistan.

¹³ 'Khurasan style' is used here for the characteristic output of Herat workshops from the 1570-80s, as defined by Basil Robinson, *A descriptive catalogue*, 138, 141-42, 151-52. A *Shahnama* (c. 1580) best suited for comparison is Pers. 295 in the Chester Beatty Library, see Arthur Arberry et al., *Catalogue of the Persian manuscripts and miniatures*, III, 64-65, and SNP.

¹⁴ Khidr 'Abbasi Naushahi, *Fihrist-i nuskhah-yi khatti-yi farisi*, 270; see SNP for illustrations. My thanks go to Barbara Schmitz who looked at the manuscript at Lahore and sent information on the miniatures not listed on the website.

¹⁵ Apart from the stylistic similarity, compare, for instance, I.O. Islamic 301, f. 100r, with f. 14r in the Lahore copy: the same arrangement including 14 figures and the architectural background appears on both miniatures, with every posture and gesture of a figure exactly repeated; and f. 52v with 70r, respectively.

¹⁶ See the website of the Princeton Shahnama project at www.princeton.edu/~shahnama

¹⁷ Karin Rührdanz, "The revival of Central Asian painting", 398-400.

they were added later as happened, too, with further miniatures in a popular Mughal style. Thus, we may take the selection of subjects and layout into consideration, but not iconography and style. This copy was written by Mir-Mah b. Mir-i 'Arab, baradar-zada-yi Mir Kulangi katib-i Bukhari¹⁸ at Samarqand at *ku-yi Mulla Anqa* (?) in the house of Mir Artyq (?).

4. Another *Shahnama* in the Punjab University Library (O-15/7248) was jointly produced by Adina (first part) and Mir Mah b. Mir-i 'Arab (second part), and is dated 1010/1601-2.¹⁹ Of its 25 miniatures, five were later added, probably by an 18th-century Kashmiri painter. Schmitz is inclined to attribute the remaining illustrations to two different artists or to one who copied different models. The latter seems more likely. The quality of the illustrations surpasses those in most other Samarqand *Shahnamas*, and the connection with the late 16th-century Bukhara style is the weakest. The division of the background into several flat layers of plain colour has nearly disappeared, and most figures are well proportioned and less awkwardly drawn. While piles of rocks and courtly figures recall a Khurasan influence, the models used are more up to date, i.e. from the 1590s.

5. National Library of Russia (NLR), St. Petersburg, PNS 90, completed in 1011/1602-3 by Mirza Muhammad b. 'Aziz al-Bukhari.²⁰ This manuscript contains 21 miniatures illustrating the text, including 3 for the *Garshasptnama*, and in addition a double page frontispiece miniature. The colophon does not mention the place of origin. The composition and iconography of several miniatures repeat representations of the same subject in the BL/I.O. manuscript in such detail and complexity that a close

¹⁸ Besides the *Shahnama* manuscripts, he is known to have copied the following three unillustrated manuscripts: In 1008/1599-1600 he completed a copy of *Rashahat 'ain al-hayat*, ms. 2195 of the Oriental Institute at Tashkent, see Semenov, *Sobranie vostochnykh rukopisei*, III, 295, no. 2500; about the turn of the century he also finished a copy of Jami's *Yusuf and Zulaikha* in Samarqand, ms. 2234 of the same collection, see *ibid.*, II, 184, no. 1184; the Arabic *Ma'arij al-nubuwwa* by Miskin was copied by him in 1019/1610, see Christie's, 8 April 2008, lot 191.

¹⁹ The information in the catalogue, see Naushahi, *Fihrist-i nuskhah-yi khatti*, 270, is incomplete and misleading. I am very grateful to Barbara Schmitz for pointing out to me that this manuscript is dated and illustrated, and for the permission to use her description of the manuscript.—When this paper was completed some of the illustrations could be accessed at SNP through the subject index.

²⁰ Leonid Giuzalian & Mikhail Diakonov, *Rukopisi Shakh-Name*, 61-64, no.16; G. Kostygova, *Persidskie i tadzhikskie rukopisi*, II, 7-8, no. 226; Mukaddima Ashrafi, *Persian-Tajik poetry in XIV-XVII centuries miniatures*, 92-95, figs. 76-77.

relationship between both manuscripts must be assumed (fig. 3, pl. 20).²¹ The different blends of Khurasan style with relicts of the 16th-century Bukhara style are most likely the result of not more than two artists participating in the illustration. The painters variably and arbitrarily combined the different elements largely derived from model compositions and stock groups of figures (fig. 4).

6. Ancient India and Iran Trust (AIIT), Cambridge, Pers. 2.01 BD is dated 23 Dhu'l-Qa'da 1012/23 April 1604.²² It was copied by Adina katib-i Bukhari who was still working at the same place, at *ku-yi Malaqand* at Samarqand. This manuscript is provided with 27 illustrations by an inexperienced hand, which shows some impact of late 16th-century Qazvin and Herat work.²³ An iconographic peculiarity of these miniatures is the abundance of demons. They were introduced into the composition wherever there was the slightest possibility they might appear. The division of the background by layers of three to five different colours, without much of an internal structure, is another characteristic element (fig. 5).

All six manuscripts so far listed can be connected to Samarqand. Four times the place is explicitly mentioned in the colophon. The manuscript transcribed by Mirza Muhammad b. 'Aziz al-Bukhari (NLR, PNS 90) stands somewhat apart, although its illustrations are obviously connected to those in other manuscripts of the Samarqand group. It is the only manuscript with a double-page frontispiece miniature and the only one that copies a more 'modern' text model, which comprised the Baysunghuri preface and two interpolations from the *Garshaspnama*.²⁴ In contrast, the model manuscript accessible to Adina Bukhari not only contained a special version of the older preface,²⁵ but also a specifically structured tale of Rustam's seven heroic deeds. Rustam's encounters with a lion, a

²¹ While two illustrations (268r and 280v) faithfully repeat the complete compositions found on ff. 136v and 142r in I.O. Islamic 301, in other cases only some figures with their postures are 're-used', as had been standard procedure in 16th-century Bukharan painting.

²² Maria Szuppe, "A preliminary account", 94-95; for the illustrations see SNP. I would like to thank Ursula Sims-Williams for her support and for providing digital photographs of all miniatures.

²³ While of better quality, a miniature painting in the BL's India Office Collection (J.26.6) shares some idiosyncrasies with these *Shahnama* illustrations, see Robinson, *India Office Library*, 186-87, no. 921.

²⁴ Giuzalian & Diakonov, *Rukopisi Shakh-Name*, 62-63.

²⁵ Szuppe, "A preliminary account", 94.



Figure 4. 'Bahram Gur hunting in the company of Azada'. *Shahnama*, Samarqand, 1602-3, National Library of Russia, St. Petersburg, PNS 90, fol. 436r (By kind permission of the National Library of Russia).



Figure 5. 'Jamshid enthroned carried by divs'. *Shahnama*, Samarqand, 1604, Ancient India and Iran Trust, Cambridge, Pers. 2.01 BD, fol. 12r (Courtesy of the Ancient India & Iran Trust).

dragon and a witch are counted as numbers one, two, and three. His fourth adventure describes how he plucked off the ears of a field watch, before he dealt with Aulad during the fifth encounter. This is in contrast to the common division that counts the discovery of a well as Rustam's second adventure and tells the story about the peasant under the heading of his capture of Aulad.²⁶ Although less frequent, the textual structure

²⁶ Firdausi, *Shahnama* (KM), II, 21-45. The variations of numbering and wording in the seven captions listed by the editor in the notes show that there was no generally

employed by Adina has a long tradition,²⁷ and the subject was illustrated as early as the Inju period.²⁸ However, very few illustrations of this story are recorded.²⁹ To these we can add now the miniature (fol. 81r) in a *Shahnama* copy attributable to Central Asia about 1600 for stylistic reasons (fig. 6, pl. 21), as follows:

7. BL Or. 14403 is incomplete at the beginning and does not provide us with any information that may have been included in its destroyed colophon.³⁰ It still comprises 41 miniatures, including illustrations of all seven deeds of Rustam. As in most manuscripts of the group, two hands were at work. The illustrations executed by the better painter concentrate in the first half of the book. In his paintings, landscape elements and spacial solutions known from late 16th-century Bukhara painting often combine with shorter figures, which seem to reflect the impact of Persian work from the second quarter of the 16th century. This influence is best recognised in warrior figures with wide slugging trousers.³¹ At the same time, it is these warrior figures that compare—to a certain degree—with the second *Shahnama* (O-15/7248) in Lahore if we look at the representation of Bizhan's rescue there (fol. 192r). Because of the discrepancies in detail, however, it does not seem that the same hand was at work (fig. 7).

accepted division of the chapter.

²⁷ A manuscript addressing the encounter with the peasant as Rustam's fourth adventure, but combining it with Aulad's capture, is TSMK, H. 1479, an Inju'id illustrated copy dated 1330, see *ibid.*, 31, note 19 (manuscript "s").

²⁸ For a leaf from the dispersed 1341 *Shahnama* in the Musée d'art et d'histoire Geneva, 1971-107/369, see Basil Robinson *et al.*, *L'Orient d'un collectionneur*, 106, 217, no. 7. The deeds are not numbered in the headings, however. For a reconstruction of the large illustrative cycle, see Marianna Shreve Simpson, "A reconstruction and preliminary account of the 1341 *Shahnama*". The album H. 2153 in the TSMK (f. 100v) contains a Jala'irid miniature featuring the subject, see Norah Titley, "Fourteenth century Persian painting", 52.

²⁹ Among the ten respective miniatures registered on the website of the SNP only five are of some relevance here: the 14th-century leaves (see preceding note) and three 15th-century manuscripts. Although f. 30v in Ryl Pers 933 is a late 16th-century painting, the manuscript belongs to the 15th century and obviously copied, with its 6 columns, a much older model, see Basil Robinson, *Persian paintings in the John Rylands Library*, 111, and 244, no. 700. Recently, a dispersed leaf depicting the episode was sold at auction, see Christie's, 16 April 2010, lot 241.

³⁰ *Annual Report 1988-89*, 19, 40.

³¹ The figure type is met in Tabriz and, more frequently, Shiraz style work, see Robinson, *John Rylands Library*, nos. 592, 595 etc. (painter B in Ryl Pers 932) and nos. 618, 620 etc. (painter A in Ryl Pers 8); Grace Guest, *Shiraz painting*, pl. 32; Lâle Uluç, *Turkman governors, Shiraz artisans and Ottoman collectors*, figs. 63, 67, 72, 80 (H. 1485) and 94, 108 (H. 760).



Figure 7. 'Rustam rescues Bizhan from the pit'. *Shahnama*, Samarqand, 1600-1605, British Library, London, Or. 14403, fol. 153r (Courtesy British Library Board. All Rights Reserved).



Figure 8. 'Shapur enthroned'. *Shahnama*, Samarqand, 1600-1605, British Library, London, Or. 14403, fol. 367v (Courtesy British Library Board. All Rights Reserved).

Neither this artist, nor the second one in BL Or. 14403, whose paintings are much more indebted to the Bukhara style (fig. 8), can be connected to one of the other manuscripts for sure. It would also be premature to think of the illustrations as following the 1602 Lahore *Shahnama* in time, because both may have been inspired in part by the same models.

Analysing the subjects and content of the illustrations in these *Shahnama* manuscripts as a group leads to the following observations:

- The number of illustrations, particularly in the Adina manuscripts, is small in contrast to contemporary Iranian copies.
- The historical part receives less attention, again in contrast to the Iranian manuscripts of that period. Adina started with a copy distributing 6 out of 23 text illustrations in the historical part and ended with 2 out of 27.
- Not only do the historical kings get little attention, the Kayanids also are rarely represented performing heroic deeds. Apart from Rustam himself, the focus is on his kin.
- There is a clear preference for fantastic adventures of the heroes. Generally, all kinds of fabulous creatures get special attention. In the case of the Cambridge ms, however, it is the *divs* in particular.

In short, we are dealing with manuscripts that had been adapted for the use of a certain clientèle. As works of art they remained modest, and in the interpretation of the text they reflect the way the oral, popular, and prose traditions presented the *Shahnama*. This was most probably a deliberate decision because it is unlikely that—with respect to the four Adina copies—such a selection of subjects would have resulted from the assumed early manuscript model.³²

What is puzzling is the stylistic variety detectable in the illustrations. It seems odd that with a group of modest manuscripts so closely tied together by time, place, text and even calligrapher (as in the case of the four copies connected to Adina), so many different artists should have been involved. There is only one internal connection: painter A, whose illustrations are mostly found at the beginning of BL I.O. Islamic 301, was most probably responsible for all miniatures in the first Lahore manuscript (dated 1600). Although two miniatures in NLR PNS 90 are replicas

³² A model manuscript containing the particular old preface and the special structure of the *Haft Kh'ān* chapter would most likely be provided with an illustrative cycle that pays due attention to the historical part, too, of the *Shahnama*. In contrast, visual neglect of this part and preference for depiction of fantastic adventures are seen more frequently in 16th-century manuscripts.

of illustrations in BL I.O. Islamic 301 (painter B), it seems less likely that they belong to the same artist, and the connections between BL Or. 14403 and the second Lahore *Shahnama* (dated 1602) may also reflect a meeting on the level of models. Several mediocre illustrators seem to have been at work at Samarqand, probably people not trained as painters, but with experience in manuscript decoration. The option left to them was the exploitation of whatever source they could lay their hands on. Such models would not belong to first-rate painting, but rather to commercial work originating from northeast Persia, and other provincial outputs. It is not only due to the short period of production that one looks in vain for internal stylistic development.³³ The artists who illustrated the *Shahnama* manuscripts were in the main not able to inaugurate such a process. This is not to say that the better ones, like the illustrator of the second Lahore *Shahnama*, could not keep up with painting in Bukhara at the turn of the century. The establishment of a rival commercial production of illustrated manuscripts of a different genre that asked for the visualization of dramatic moments was too much of an endeavour for mediocre artists. Eventually, the initiative of some Bukharan calligraphers settling in Samarqand to produce illustrated *Shahnama* manuscripts, and—most unusually—advertising this new product by mentioning an ‘address’ in the colophons, did not meet with success. They did not receive the patronage they had hoped for and could not attract first class artists.

The picture presented so far, however, only shows one side of the coin. In fact, one well-known artist, Muhammad Murad Samarqandi, and probably a second too, Muhammad Sharif, got involved in *Shahnama* illustration at about that time. There is, first, ms. 1811 of the Oriental Institute at Tashkent.³⁴ Since the copy was an unfinished left-over from the middle of the preceding century (copied 1556–57 in Khiva), the selection of its 116 subjects for illustration was decided upon long before Muhammad Murad executed the paintings, and it is in this case only iconography and style that belong to the period under consideration. While the name of the art-

³³ As comparison between the earliest manuscripts of the group and the AIIT copy of 1604 shows, the situation did not improve in the course of the five years documented, but rather got worse.

³⁴ Semenov, *Sobranie vostochnykh rukopisei*, II, 20, no. 751; for reproductions, see Ashrafi, *Persian-Tajik poetry*, 94–103, pls. 78–84; Galina Pugachenkova & Olympiada Galerikina, *Miniatiury Srednei Azii*, 108–117, pls. 28–32; Olympiada Galerikina, *Mavarannahr book painting*, pls. 21–28; Elmira Ismailova, *Oriental miniatures*, pls. 44–45; Elena Poliakova & Zuhra Rakhimova, *L'art de la miniature*, pls. 85–88, 90–91; see also Rührdanz, “The revival of Central Asian painting”, 390–91.

ist is inscribed on several miniatures, no date is given. Compared with paintings executed by Muhammad Murad Samarqandi about 1616,³⁵ those in the *Shahnama* seem to be earlier, most probably belonging to the first decade of the 17th century. Frequently dealing with picture areas less than 5 cm high, he demonstrated an impressive ability to invent compositions fitting into odd spaces, to reduce the scene to its basics without appearing simple, and to create expressive figures. On most miniatures his drawing is firm and fluid. Although not every miniature is equally well executed,³⁶ this is not the patchwork characteristic of the mentioned group of Samarqand *Shahnama* manuscripts. Muhammad Murad's illustrations present a coherent style, which was most likely based upon training in Khurasan, masterfully transformed into a personal idiom with time. His superior ability also shows in his regionalising representation to a certain degree (particularly headgears) without falling back on typical 16th-century Bukhara figures or background elements.

The existence of a second *Shahnama* manuscript can be concluded from one dispersed miniature.³⁷ Now mounted, this picture of the enthroned king Zakhak must once have been part of a *Shahnama* copy (fig. 9, pl. 22). With respect to Muhammad Sharif's work created about 1616,³⁸ the attribution of the miniature to this artist seems very plausible, as well as a date in the late first or early second decade of the 17th century.³⁹ As with Muhammad Murad's work, there is a consistent style, not the varying combination of different elements. Some connections to NLR PNS 90 may exist: The division of the architectural background in the LACMA *Shahnama* miniature, the placement of female onlookers on the balconies and how their figures are drawn and dressed, and the area above the opening of the ivan with its illumination-like ornamentation,

³⁵ In a copy of Sa'di's *Bustan*, Chester Beatty Library (CB), Dublin, Pers 297, see Arberry *et al.*, *A catalogue of the Persian manuscripts*, III, 66-67; for its illustrations by Muhammad Murad, see Robert Skelton, "Relations between Mughal and Central Asian painting", figs. 1-4.

³⁶ Although rarely, short stiff figures do appear on his paintings. Occasionally, the posture of a figure does not match its action.

³⁷ Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), M83.27.2, see <http://collections.online.lacma.org>. For a second painting obviously from the same manuscript and recently published, see Barbara Brend & Charles Melville, *Epic of the Persian Kings: the art of Ferdowsi's Shahnameh*, 71, no. 8.

³⁸ See note 35. For illustrations by Muhammad Sharif, see Rühdanz, "The revival of Central Asian painting", pl. 3; Sheila Blair & Jonathan Bloom, *Art and architecture of Islam*, 210, fig. 266.

³⁹ Barbara Schmitz, "Bukhara vi. The Bukharan school of miniature painting", 529.

point to a relationship, since long left behind, to an artist or workshop involved in the earlier production of *Shahnamas*.

Thus, the extant material indicates that individual calligraphers or commercial workshops in Samarqand initiated a process that, after a few years, reached more important patrons and involved first-class painters. Adina Bukhari was not fully mistaken when he expected a certain demand for illustrated *Shahnama* manuscripts. It was not him, however, nor his colleagues who profited from this development, because it happened in Bukhara.

For the time being, it seems impossible to explain fully the sudden rising interest in illustrated *Shahnama* copies. For sure, one factor was the exposure of Central Asian amirs and bureaucrats to the sophisticated book culture in the main cities of Khurasan during the period of Shaibanid occupation. With neighbouring Khurasan, the Bukharan artists had already shared developments in manuscript decoration, particularly the treatment of margins, before the Shaibanids invaded this area in 1587. Illustrated manuscripts and album leaves were among the booty, and during the occupation of Herat painters trained in Khurasan style worked for Uzbek nobles.⁴⁰ When they were forced to give up Khurasan in 1598, some of them continued in the appreciation of illustrated manuscripts as proof of their social standing. In this respect, the most important manuscript is a *Shahnama* that belonged to Shah Beg b. Mirza Beg Ataliq.⁴¹ Most probably made during the Uzbek occupation of Herat, it must have been in the possession of the amir Shah Beg when he was sent to Balkh as ataliq of Nadhr Muhammad b. Din Muhammad in 1607, in order to represent the khan Vali Muhammad (1605-12) there.⁴²

While the illustrations in this manuscript can be placed within the development leading from the Khurasan style of the 1570s to Herat painting about 1600,⁴³ other contemporary manuscripts are more difficult to assess. Among the northeast Iranian provincial production, two *Shahnama* copies in the John Rylands University Library should be specially mentioned, both transcribed earlier, but with many illustrations added in

⁴⁰ Barbara Schmitz, "Miniature painting in Harāt", 126-34, and descriptions of manuscripts (including unillustrated) 279-84 (I-III), 290 (VII), 324 (XXIX), 379-87 (LII-LV).

⁴¹ Already mentioned (no. CXCI) in Basil W. Robinson's unpublished catalogue of the Kevorkian Collection, it appeared on auction twice, see Sotheby's, 23 April 1979, lot 178; Christie's, 16 October 2001, lot 76.

⁴² He was killed in an uprising in 1608, see Burton, *The Bukharans*, 127.

⁴³ Schmitz, "Miniature painting in Harāt", 131-36.

the late 16th century.⁴⁴ Of particular interest is ms. Ryl Pers 910. Several of its illustrations exhibit a number of characteristics also met in Muhammad Murad's illustrations to the *Shahnama*. At this point, however, it is not the precise stylistic relationship that should be further discussed, but the importance this connection has for linking cultural phenomena in Iran and Central Asia. If seen in a wider context, the surge in illustrated *Shahnama* manuscripts in Central Asia seems to be part of the increased interest in this text in northeast Iran in the last quarter of the 16th century, documented by a large number of newly produced illustrated manuscripts of diverse quality and the completion of many unfinished copies. Most likely, this was provoked by the state of permanent war with the Uzbeks, the breakdown of internal order and simultaneous expectations that a new shah (starting his bid for legitimate rule from Khurasan, as 'Abbas did) would restore it. In periods of turmoil filled with hopes for a renewal of centralised power, Iranians easily identified with the *Shahnama*.

As already mentioned, the Uzbek élite, particularly those members who spent some time in posts in Khurasan during the 1590s adopted the Iranian book culture to a certain degree. Besides, they may have felt themselves to be in a comparable situation, first with the military success against the Safavids, then with the process of disintegration of Shaibanid power after the death of 'Abd-Allah Khan, and finally with the rallying behind a new dynasty, the Janids.

The arrival at Samarqand of calligraphers who were proud of their Bukharan origin and/or training, and their decision to focus on the making of illustrated *Shahnama* manuscripts there, could well be connected with expectations set on the new dynasty. For about a year between the autumn of 1598 and summer 1599, Samarqand had become the operational base of the Janid clan, with Baqi Muhammad as the leading figure after the death of his elder brother Din Muhammad at Herat. He made Samarqand his residence until he was firmly established. In July 1599 he transferred his court to Bukhara and gave the governorship of Samarqand to his father Jani Muhammad, who ruled there until his death in 1603, when he was followed by his grandson Imamquli b. Din Muhammad (until 1612).⁴⁵ Thus, the six dated *Shahnama* manuscripts were mostly

⁴⁴ For Ryl Pers. 933, see Robinson, *John Rylands Library*, 111-15, 244, 252-62, nos. 475-78, 694-768, and for Ryl Pers 910, see *ibid.*, 118-48, 262-69, nos. 481-549, 769-800. For the cycle of illustration in both manuscripts, see also SNP.

⁴⁵ McChesney, "Central Asia vi", 183-85, 189.

produced during the governorship of Jani Muhammad and the early days of Imamquli Khan. However, both the Janids, as far as we know, never developed an interest in the art of the book. This lack of encouragement may have contributed to the failure of the Samarqand initiative.

In Bukhara, where Vali Muhammad, brother of the late Din Muhammad and Baqi Muhammad, resided from 1603 to 1612, things developed in a different direction. To the patronage of this Janid we owe an illustrated *Mihr-u Mushtari* manuscript, now in Patna.⁴⁶ It was completed at the end of Sha'ban 1017/January 1609 by Mahmud b. Muhammad Mu'min al-Bukhari. The quality of its five miniatures fits with royal patronage and confirms that Bukhara again took the lead in the production of illustrated manuscripts.

In the *Mihr-u Mushtari* copy all illustrations extend into the margins while keeping within straight frames.⁴⁷ The relation between picture area and figure size allows for a number of subordinated actors and onlookers, each of which exhibits an individual response to the main subject. Landscape creates a multilayered, usually internally structured background. Richly ornamented architecture and furniture is built with diagonal lines, but in one case combines inner and outdoor space in a simple, not convincing manner. Smooth movement, the humble postures of kneeling figures, bent necks, and slightly larger and softer turbans recall certain Qazvin style work, as was most likely produced in Herat during the 1590s (fig. 10).⁴⁸

The paintings in the *Mihr-u Mushtari* copy connect to another group of illustrated manuscripts from the first decade of the 17th century, which is usually attributed to Bukhara.⁴⁹ The earliest manuscript of the group is a *Majalis al-'ushshaq* dated 1606,⁵⁰ the illustration of which was never finished. To do justice to this manuscript one must disregard the impression created by clumsily overpainted or 'completed' miniatures, but take their

⁴⁶ Abdul Muqtadir, *Catalogue of the Arabic and Persian manuscripts*, I, 225-27, no. 148. I would like to thank Sonja Brentjes for her help in obtaining a microfilm of the manuscript and for descriptions of the miniatures.

⁴⁷ Compared with the size of the written surface, 14 x 7 cm, in the small manuscript (23 x 15.3 cm) this considerably enlarges the painted space.

⁴⁸ Schmitz, "Miniature painting in Harāt", 125-40.

⁴⁹ Rührdanz, "The revival of Central Asian painting", 390-98.

⁵⁰ Ms. 3476 of the Oriental Institute, see Semenov, *Sobranie vostochnykh rukopisei*, III, 291-92, no. 2488; Galerikina, *Mawarannahr book painting*, pls. 36-40; Ismailova, *Oriental miniatures*, pls. 29-33; Poliakova & Rakhimova, *L'art de la miniature*, pls. 92-97. The calligrapher, Mir Salih (b. Mir Tahir) Bukhari, is connected to Bukhara through earlier (1598, 1599) and later work.



Figure 10. 'Mushtari and a companion about to be executed'. Assar, *Mihr-u Mushtari*, Bukhara, 1609, Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library, Patna, ms. no. 148, fol. 44v (Courtesy Khuda Bakhsh Oriental Public Library).

sketches into account, which frequently hint at more interesting compositions than just representations of Sufi conversations. Painters of unequal artistic ability and innovative spirit co-operated in the illustration of the manuscript. The works of the best painter have some traits, including elements of regionalised dress, in common with Muhammad Murad's *Shahnama* miniatures.⁵¹ The same connection can be made with the *Mihr-u Mushtari* illustrations, although the specifics of the story and its interpretation by the five miniatures as a reflection of courtly culture and aristocratic pleasures asked for a different kind of composition.

⁵¹ One wonders whether those illustrations may be by Muhammad Murad. Without a thorough inspection of both manuscripts such a conclusion would be premature, however.

While the *Mihr-u Mushtari* copy proves Vali Muhammad's patronage of book art for the period he had succeeded to the khanate (1605) and resided at Bukhara, we can only speculate whether the two above-mentioned high-quality *Shahnamas* were made for him. That they—like the Samarqand group—must have been due to a climate more favourable to the *Shahnama*, seems obvious. There is some reason to assume that Vali Muhammad may have been more in agreement with the tenor of the *Shahnama* and may have seen it as a vehicle to promote his own centralising aspirations.⁵²

If so, his downfall marked the end of the *Shahnama* enterprise. Limited production of illustrated manuscripts continued in Bukhara: to an undated *Bustan*,⁵³ two dated manuscripts must be added from the second decade of the 17th century, Durbek's *Yusuf and Zulaikha* (1615)⁵⁴ and the already mentioned *Bustan* (1616).⁵⁵ Altogether, they demonstrate that Central Asian manuscript illustration had not only returned to Bukhara, but also to its former topics: didactic literature and *masnavi*s with mystical overtones. The illustrated *Shahnama* again went out of demand. With regard to the few manuscripts so far known, this conclusion should still be provided with a question mark. It seems, however, that neither the rulers nor the military and civil élite in early modern Central Asia got genuinely enthusiastic about the *Shahnama*. It remains to be seen to what extent its place was taken by poems and prose texts in praise of Timur.⁵⁶

⁵² From the unfavourable judgement of his reign reported by Burton, *The Bukharans*, 123–34, one may, with caution, deduce that he tried to minimise the role of other clan members, centralise rule and create alliances with urban powers.

⁵³ New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 13.228.23, see Alexander Jackson & Abraham Yohannan, *A Catalogue of the collection of Persian manuscripts*, 108–15, no. 14; for a miniature, see Rühdanz, "The revival of Central Asian painting", pl. 4.

⁵⁴ Tashkent, Oriental Institute, ms. 1433, see Semenov, *Sobranie vostochnykh rukopisei*, II, 152, no. 1101; for illustrations, see Pugachenkova & Galerkina, *Miniatiury Srednei Azii*, pl. 54; Galerkina, *Mavarannahr book painting*, pl. 41; Ismailova, *Oriental Miniatures*, pl. 34; Poliakova & Rakhimova, *L'art de la miniature*, pls. 98–100.

⁵⁵ See note 35.

⁵⁶ See the still enigmatic *Timurnama*, by Hatifi, in the BL, Add. 22703, see Charles Rieu, *Catalogue of the Persian manuscripts*, II, 654; Norah Titley, *Miniatures from Persian manuscripts*, 61, no. 183; for a double page miniature in this manuscript that clearly originates from the early 17th century, see Pugachenkova & Galerkina, *Miniatiury Srednei Azii*, 149, 152–53, no. 48; and the *Zafarnama* by 'Ali Yazdi, at the Oriental Institute at Tashkent, ms. 4472, see Aleksandr Semenov & Voronovskii, *Sobranie vostochnykh rukopisei*, VIII, 27–31, no. 5625; for illustrations, see Pugachenkova & Galerkina, *Miniatiury Srednei Azii*, 172–75, no. 58–59; Galerkina, *Mavarannahr book painting*, pls. 42–46; Ismailova, *Oriental miniatures*, pls. 35–37; Poliakova & Rakhimova, *L'art de la miniature*, pls. 101–7.

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PART THREE

MANUSCRIPT STUDIES

MAPPING ILLUSTRATED FOLIOS OF *SHAHNAMA* MANUSCRIPTS: THE CONCEPT AND ITS USES

Farhad Mehran

The information content of the text surrounding the image is largely unexploited in studies of illustrated *Shahnama* folios. The purpose of this paper is to propose a systematic procedure, called mapping, which extracts the relevant information on the folio for a range of useful analyses. Specifically, mapping records the presence and absence of verses according to a reference edition of the *Shahnama*, replacing the folio with a series of corresponding numbers and markers positioned in such a way as to maintain the essential textual and pictorial information on the folio.

Some applications of mapping presented in this paper include: Determining the relative position of the critical verse that best describes the central theme of the image; deriving summary statistics that characterise manuscripts and point to their differences; detecting patterns of added and omitted verses around the image and interpreting their significance; relating manuscripts with each other on the basis of their shared added and omitted verses, and deriving their genealogy; reconstructing altered and missing folios, and deducing the location and title of missing images.

MAPPING FOLIOS

Mapping is the process of replacing the key elements of a folio of a *Shahnama* manuscript by corresponding codes into a grid representing the layout of the folio. In particular, mapping the text of a folio consists of replacing each verse by its corresponding verse number according to a reference edition of the *Shahnama*.¹ The choice of the reference edition influences the mapping pattern and the resulting statistics. Here the Khaleghi-Motlagh edition is used as the reference edition because it is considered as the most authoritative and possibly the closest approxima-

¹ The reference edition used in this paper is by Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh, hereafter cited as Khaleghi or KM, followed by volume, page and verse nos. English translations are taken from A.G. Warner & E. Warner, *The Shahnama of Firdausi*, hereafter WW.

The correspondence between the verses of the Cairo folio and those of the Khaleghi edition of the *Shahnama* are mapped into the grid on the right panel with 4 columns and 25 rows representing the layout of the Cairo folio. Each verse of the folio is represented on the grid by its Khaleghi verse number.

Matched Verses

The presence of a verse number in the grid does not necessarily mean that there is an exact match between the verse on the folio and the corresponding verse in the reference edition. In practice, a match depends to a great extent on the reader, but in most cases the correspondence can be easily spotted. Examples of an exact match, an almost exact match, and a sufficiently close match, all from the same Cairo folio are shown below:

Exact match

Cairo, Ms. 311, f. 234r, v. 1899	هشیار و دیده بسی کار زار	دو جنگی و هردو دلیر و سوار
KM, IV, 121, v. 1899	هشیار و دیده بسی کار زار	دو جنگی و هردو دلیر و سوار

WW, IV, 102, par. 33

Both brave, both horsemen, shrewd and veteran

Almost exact match

Cairo, Ms. 311, f. 234r, v. 1906	سر آویخته پایها زیر تنک	بزمین اندر افکند و بستش چو سنگ
KM, IV, 122, v. 1906	سر آویخته پای هازیر تنگ	به زمین اندر آهخت و بستش چو سنگ

WW, IV, 102, para. 33

Raised him upon the saddle and there bound him
Firm as a rock, with hanging head and feet

Less than exact match, but sufficiently close

Cairo, Ms. 311, f. 234r, v. 1910	ابر شاه کیخسرو و تخت و کاه	همی آفرین خواند بسالار شاه
KM, IV, 122, v. 1910	بر آن تخمه ی خسرو نیک خواه	بکرد آفرین بر جهاندار شاه

WW, IV, 102, para. 33

And throne exalted, and began to call
Down praise upon him and his kin withal

Added Verses

An added verse is a verse on the folio that could not be found in the reference edition, or more precisely could not be matched in the sense described above with a verse in the reference edition. In the sample folio presented earlier, there are two added verses for which no match could be found in the Khaleghi edition. They are reproduced below:

Added verse

Cairo, Ms. 311, f. 234r, v. 1904+	توی و را بر تو آن رهنمای	هی گفت کای دادگر تک خدای
KM, IV, p. 122, not found	...	...

Not in WW

Added verse

Cairo, Ms. 311, f. 234r, v. 1905+	دل از نبروی خویش پندان شده	به بیروزی خویش خندان شده
KM, IV, 122, not found	...	...

Not in WW

If a verse is not found in the Khaleghi edition, as is the case of the two verses before and after verse 1905, the grid is marked with the symbol "+".

Omitted Verses

An omitted verse is a verse in the reference edition that cannot be found on the folio. For example, looking at the sequence of numbers on the folio, it can be observed that a verse between 1893 and 1895 is missing. This omitted verse, verse number 1894 according to the Khaleghi edition is:

Omitted verse

Cairo, Ms. 311, f. 234r, not found	...	...
KM, IV, 121, v. 1894	به خون غرقه گشته برو تیغ و چنگ	به بالا بر آمد بسان پلنگ

WW, IV, 102, para. 33

And scaled the hill, as he had been a leopard,
With breast and hand and sword all drenched
with gore.

To help spot omitted verses on the mapped folio, they are marked with a heavy double vertical line at the beginning of the space where the verse is considered missing.

Relocated Verses

A verse that cannot be found at its expected location may be found elsewhere on the folio or perhaps on a different folio of the manuscript. A relocated verse is thus a verse that is out of sequence relative to the sequence of verses in the reference edition.

An example is given in fig. 2, with two images. The top image shows the same scene as the Cairo folio, Ruhham kills Barman. The bottom shows the next combat, between Bizhan and Ru'in, as indicated by the heading before the image. The verses around the images are mapped into the Khaleghi edition on the grid on the right. Looking at the verse numbers, it can be observed that verse number 1904 is out of sequence, appearing after verse 1909 in the place of verse 1910, which is missing.

Another example of relocated verses is given in fig. 3. Each folio contains three images from the Twelve *Rukhs* story. On these two pages, therefore, 6 of the 12 combats can be seen at once. The text around the images is mapped into the Khaleghi edition on the grid at the top of the double-folio.

On the margins, the start and end of each episode is marked with arrows and the name of the episode: the first episode on the right folio is the combat between Ruhham and Barman, followed by the combat between Bizhan and Ru'in, then between Hujir and Sipahram; on the next folio on the left, is the combat between Giv and Guruy, followed by the combat between Guraza and Siyamak, and then between Zanga and Avkhast.

Looking at the verse numbers marked in between bracketed arrows, it can be noted that the two top episodes on the left are out of sequence compared with the Khaleghi edition, in which these two episodes precede the Ruhham and Barman episode, and should have been placed on the recto side of folio 129, if the order of the Khaleghi edition were respected. An isolated out-of-sequence verse marked by an arrow can also be observed on the right folio, verse number 1918.



Figure 2. 'Ruhham kills Barman (top) and Bizhan kills Ru'in (bottom)'. *Shahnama*, University and Sachsen-Anhalt Library, Halle, Germany, Ms. Yb 4^o 13, f. 204v, dated 9 Rabi' I, 849/23 June 1445; KM, IV, 121, vs. 1901-1920.

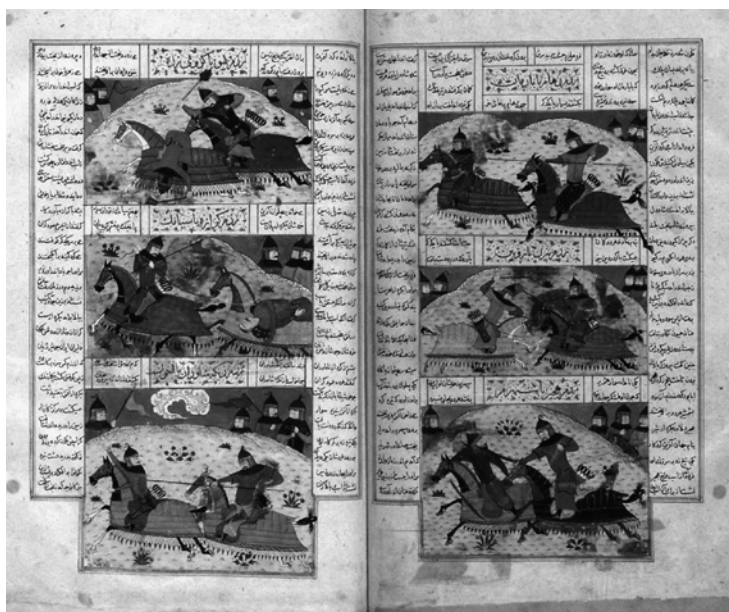


Figure 3. 'Ruhham and Barman, Bizhan and Ru'in, Hujir and Sipahram' (f. 129v); 'Giv and Guruy, Guraza and Siyamak, Zanga and Avkhast' (f. 130r). *Shahnama*, Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, Ms. or. fol. 4255, dated 19 Rajab 894/18 June 1489; KM, IV, 121-29, vs. 1857-1956.

Giv and Guruy	1938	1938		1937	1937	O u t o f s e q u e n c e	1893	1893		1892	1892	1891	1891
	1858	1858		1857	1857		1895	1895				1894	1894
	1861				1861		1897	1897				1896	1896
	1862				1862		1901	1901		1900	1900	1898	1898
	1863				1863		1902					1902	1902
	1865				1865		1903					1903	1903
	1866				1866		1904					1904	1904
	1867				1867		1905					1905	1905
	1868				1868		1906					1906	1906
	1869				1869		1907					1907	1907
	1872				1871		1908					1908	1908
	1874				1873		1909					1909	1909
	1875				1875		1912					1910	1910
	1877				1877		1914					1913	1913
	1878				1878		1915					1915	1915
	1879				1879		1920					1920	1920
Guraza and Siyamak	1880				1880	O u t o f s e q u e n c e	1921					1921	1921
	1881				1881		1918					1918	1918
	1882				1882		1923					1923	1923
	1883				1883		1924					1924	1924
	1940				1939		1925					1925	1925
	1942				1941		1927					1926	1926
	1944				1944		1929					1928	1928
	1950				1950		1930					1930	1930
	1951				1951		1931					1931	1931
	1952				1952		1932					1932	1932
	1953				1953		1933					1933	1933
	1955				1955		1935					1935	1935
	1956				1956		1936					1936	1936
Zanga and Avkhast						O u t o f s e q u e n c e							
Ruhham and Barman						O u t o f s e q u e n c e							
Bizhan and Ruyin						O u t o f s e q u e n c e							
Hujir and Sipahram						O u t o f s e q u e n c e							

Critical and Break-line Verses

In addition to out-of-sequence verses, these folios provide examples of a feature of Persian book painting, that images are generally placed within the space of the text to which they refer. In an earlier paper, the author has shown that not only are images generally placed within their respective text, but in many cases the verse just before the image (the 'break-line' verse) is in fact precisely the critical verse that best describes the central scene depicted on the picture.³

Mapping provides a convenient tool to verify the extent of validity of these assertions. Consider the illustrated folios presented above. There are three images per page—an extremely unusual rate in illustrated *Shahnama* manuscripts. The principle of placement of images within text is, however, respected in all cases: the Ruhham and Barman scene is placed within the corresponding text (verse numbers 1896-1910); Bizhan and Ru'in on target between 1912 and 1925; Hujir and Sipahram between 1926 and 1938, and so on.

A finer analysis by Charles Melville identifies the critical verse that best describes the image, for each of the images of these folios, and com-

³ Farhad Mehran, "The break-line verse: Link between text and image in early *Shahnama* manuscripts", 151-69.

parens them with the position of the corresponding break-line verses.⁴ For example, for the Ruhham and Barman image, the break-line verse is Khaleghi verse number 1901 (not exact match), and the critical verse is Khaleghi verse number 1903. The critical verse is thus two verses away from the break-line verse.

KM, IV, 121, v. 1901 (break-line verse)	یکی نیزه انداخت به ران او کز اسب اندر آمد بفرمان او
KM, IV, 121, v. 1903 (critical verse)	پشت اندر ش نیزه زد دگر سنان اندر آمد میان جگر

WW, IV, 102, para. 33 Quailed, yet by thrusting at his foeman's thigh
Dismounted him and had him at command

WW, IV, 102, para. 33 [Of battle came Ruhham] and from behind
Thrust yet again and pierced him through the liver

In the mapped folios reproduced below, the positions of the critical and break-line verses can be similarly compared for the other five images on these folios. The maximum distance between the critical verse and the break-line verse is 5 verses.

Another point worth noting in these folios is the high incidence of omitted verses in relation to the Khaleghi edition: 7 on the right folio (nos. 1899, 1911, 1916-17, 1919, 1922, and 1834) and 12 on the left folio (nos. 1859, 1860, 1864, 1870, 1876, 1943, 1945-49, and 1954). Could this high rate of omitted verses be accidental? Or is it intentional, an attempt to eliminate certain less important verses from the page to provide sufficient room for placing the images within their respective text (fig. 4)?

Mapping Non-verse Elements

The non-verse elements of an illustrated *Shahnama* folio include images, headings and other objects such as such as *sarlahu* (سر لوحه) and blank spaces found on a page. These elements are mapped with coded shades: dark grey for images, light grey for headings and *sarlahu*, and white for blanks. For example, the non-verse part of the Cairo folio of Ruhham and

⁴ Charles Melville, "Serial killers: the mise-en-page of Firdausi's 'Davazdah rukh'", esp. 77-78.

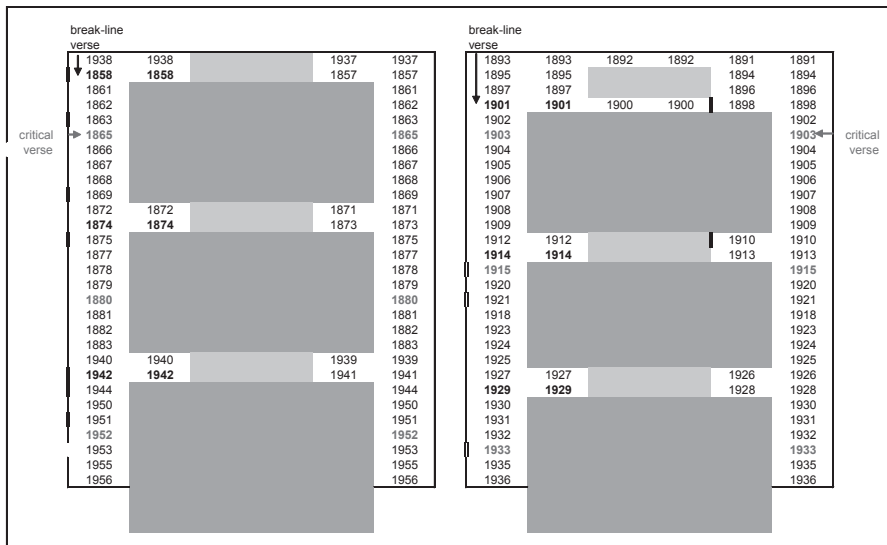


Figure 4. *Shahnama*. Staatsbibliothek, Berlin, Ms. or. fol. 4255, ff. 129v and 130r, mapped.

Barman shown in fig. 1 consists of one image and two headings. The image is mapped in dark grey and the headings in the light grey on the right grid.

A useful application of mapping is the framework it provides for measuring the size of the non-verse elements found on the page, using the verse, or more precisely, the equivalent space of a verse as the measurement unit. This measurement unit arises naturally from the mapping grid. The grid forming the page layout of a folio is typically made of 4 or 6 columns and a certain number of rows. For example, the page layout of the Ruhham and Barman folio mentioned earlier is 4 by 25 (4 columns and 25 rows). A full-text page will therefore have 50 verses ($50 = 4 \times 25/2$). We shall say that the size of the page is 50.

The size of the image is measured by the equivalent number of verses that the image occupies on the grid of the page. In this system, the parts of the image that may extend to the margins of the page are not included in the measurement. Thus, the Ruhham and Barman image (fig. 1) measures 24 verses including the stepped top part of the image on the grid, but excluding those parts that extend into the margin. This measurement procedure is particularly convenient for stepped and irregular images where the common method of measurement in terms of rulers and centimeters is not really practical.

The size of the headings and other non-verse elements can be similarly measured in terms of equivalent number of verses. Thus, the two headings in the Ruhham and Barman folio measure 2 verses each.

MAPPING MANUSCRIPTS

Mapping a Single Manuscript

The mapping operation as described in the preceding section may be carried out for different folios of the same manuscript or for the same passage of different manuscripts. The resulting information provides useful summary data for characterising the content of a manuscript. It also provides comparative data for relating manuscripts to each other or distinguishing them from one another.

When a sufficient number of folios of a given manuscript are mapped, the results give rise to a set of statistics that summarises the key features of the manuscript. Four basic summary statistics are considered here, two concerning images and two the text:

- The average size of the images measured in terms of equivalent number of verses;
- The relative size of the images measured in terms of the percentage of the space taken by the images relative to total space of the grid.
- The rate of added verses measured by the ratio of the number of added verses relative to the total number of verses on the sample pages, expressed in percentage (r_a);
- The rate of omitted verses measured by the ratio of the number of omitted verses relative to the total number of verses in the reference edition covered by the sample pages, expressed in percentage (r_o).

The following table illustrates the various calculations involved. The data are obtained by mapping 18 illustrated folios of the scenes of the reign of Kay Khusrau of the well-known *Shahnama* manuscript known as the First Small *Shahnama*.⁵ The results may be compared with the statistics reported by Khaleghi-Motlagh on six basic manuscripts used in the preparation of his critical edition of Firdausi's epic.⁶

⁵ Marianna Shreve Simpson, *The illustration of an epic. The earliest Shahnama manuscripts*, 372-74.

⁶ Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh, "Statistics of omitted and spurious verses in six manuscripts of the *Shahnama*", 17-45.

As indicated in the table, the grid defining the page lay-out of a folio of the First Small *Shahnama* is 6 columns (line 1) by 29 rows (line 2), giving rise to 174 cells equivalent to space for 87 verses (line 3). The sample is composed of 18 pages (line 4), with total equivalent size of 1,566 verses (line 5). The total size is decomposed into 983 actual verses (line 6) and space equivalent to 583 verses (line 7) of which 571 are filled by images and 12 by headings.

Of the 983 *Shahnama* verses in the sample pages, 934 match with the Khaleghi-Motlagh reference edition and 49 are additions. There are 23 omitted verses and 6 relocated verses. It is instructive to note that the number of added verses is larger than the number of omitted verses by a ratio of more than 2 to 1 (for every omitted verse there are 2 or more added verses). Relocated verses are the fewest (one for every 4 omitted verses).

The summary statistics indicate that for the 18 illustrated folios of the reign of Kay Khusrau in the First Small *Shahnama*:

- 5.0% of the verses are additions, not found in the reference edition
- 2.4% are omissions, verses in the reference edition not found in the manuscript
- Images take on average the equivalent space of about 32 verses
- Images take on average about 36.5% of the page layout.

Mapping data from the reign of Kay Khusrau in the First Small *Shahnama*

Item	Data
PAGE LAY-OUT	
1. Number of columns	6
2. Number of rows	29
3. Size of page (in equivalent number of verses)	<u>87</u> = 6x29/2
SAMPLE	
4. Number of sample folios (image side)	18
5. Total size of sample pages (in equivalent number of verses)	<u>1,566</u> = 18x87
6. Number of actual verses on sample pages	<u>983</u>
– Number of matched verses	934
– Number of added verses	49
– Number of omitted verses	23
– Number of relocated verses	6
7. Space for non-verses on sample pages	<u>583</u>
– Total image space (in equivalent number of verses)	571
– Total heading space (in equivalent number of verses)	12
SUMMARY STATISTICS	
8. Text	
– Rate of added verses (r_a)	5.0% = 100x49/983

Item	Data
– Rate of omitted verses (r_o) ⁷	2.4% = $100 \times 23/957$
9. Image	
– Average size of images	31.7 = $571/18$
– Relative size of images	36.5% = $100 \times 571/1,566$

Mapping Several Manuscripts

When comparing manuscripts, the ideal situation is to map all their folios and compare the resulting full sets of statistics. In practice, however, complete mapping of manuscripts may be a tedious task or simply impossible if they are dismantled with missing folios, as in the case of the First and Second Small *Shahnamas*. In such cases, the comparison may be based on a representative sample of folios covering the same passage of the text in the different manuscripts.

When the matched sample is too small and not representative, an alternative procedure for comparing manuscripts would be to consider an auxiliary manuscript, hopefully complete, that has a large overlap with each of the manuscripts to be compared. Suppose that manuscripts A and B with many missing folios are to be compared, say,

A = First Small *Shahnama*

B = Second Small *Shahnama*.

Suppose further that the intersection between A and B is too small to provide a sufficiently representative sample for comparison. A third manuscript C may be considered, say

C = Istanbul, Inju *Shahnama* (Topkapı Museum, H. 1479, dated 1331)

such that C has a large intersection with A and a large intersection with B, although not necessarily the same segment (i.e., the two intersections may differ from each other).

⁷ The rate of omitted verses is calculated slightly different than that of the added verses because for a ratio to be a percentage, the numerator should be included in the denominator. Therefore, for the calculation of the rate of omitted verses, the denominator is defined as the total number of verses in the reference edition to include the omitted verses, not found in the manuscript itself.

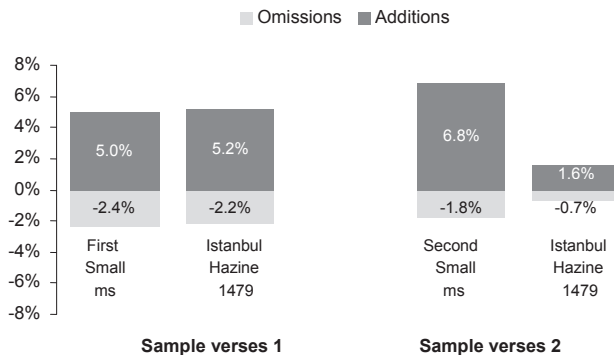
Such a setting is generally sufficient to make a valid comparison between the two original manuscripts, A and B. The summary statistics of A and C are compared for the same passages. Similarly, the summary statistics of B and C are compared with the corresponding common passages between B and C. The results are then used to make inferences about A and B.

The analysis is illustrated in the following graphic. It shows the incidence of added and omitted verses for common passages of the reign of Kay Khusrau in the First Small *Shahnama* and the Istanbul Inju *Shahnama* on the left, and the corresponding comparison between the Second Small *Shahnama* and the Istanbul Inju *Shahnama* on the right.

It can be observed that the rate of added verses in the First Small *Shahnama* is about the same as the rate in the Istanbul *Shahnama* for their common passages, but the rate of the Second Small *Shahnama* is considerably larger than the corresponding rate in the Istanbul manuscript. It can be concluded that the rate of added verses in the First Small *Shahnama* is lower than the rate in the Second Small *Shahnama*.

A similar conclusion may be drawn with respect to omitted verses: Omitted verses are less frequent in the First Small *Shahnama* than in the Second Small *Shahnama*, and this despite the fact that the measured rate of omitted verses of the First Small *Shahnama* is seemingly larger (2.4%) than the rate of the Second Small *Shahnama* (1.8%). This conclusion follows from the comparison over fixed passages as opposed to the comparison over variable passages. The result remains essentially unchanged if a different comparison manuscript C is used, for example, C = British Library, London manuscript, dated 675/1277 (BL, Add. 21,103).

Incidence of added and omitted verses: Comparison of *Shahnama* manuscripts



The comparison of images shows that the average size of the 18 images of the First Small *Shahnama* illustrations of the reign of Kay Khusrau is 31.7, compared with 33.7 for those of the Second Small *Shahnama*, and 37 for those of the Istanbul manuscript. These numbers suggest that the Istanbul images are larger than the corresponding First and Second Small *Shahnama* images, which is indeed the case both in physical terms and in terms of equivalent number of verses. But in relation to the size of the text, the Istanbul images are in fact slightly smaller (36.2) than the images of both the First Small *Shahnama* (36.4) and the Second Small *Shahnama* (38.7).

One can conclude that the “small” attributions given to the two First and Second Small *Shahnama* manuscripts, while valid in terms of their physical size, it is not valid in relative terms. Between 1300 and 1330, when larger pages were used for manuscripts, the space allocated for images was not increased proportionally. In fact, it slightly decreased.

Patterns of Added and Omitted Verses

Mapped folios of the same passage from different manuscripts may be compared to study other issues, for example, the location of added and omitted verses in the passage. To show this, the folios covering the story of Ruhham and Barman in 18 illustrated *Shahnama* manuscripts dating from the 14th to the 19th centuries have been mapped and the results presented in a comparative format in the following table.⁸

The rows of the table represent the 18 manuscripts, listed in chronological order. The columns represent the verses of the Ruhham and Barman story according to the verse numbers of the Khaleghi edition, augmented by the added verses not included in Khaleghi. If a Khaleghi verse is found in a manuscript in its proper sequence, the corresponding cell at the intersection of the row and the column representing the manuscript and the verse is marked by an “x”. If it is out of sequence, it is marked in bold “X”. If the verse is missing in the manuscript, the cell is marked by “-” in a light grey box. If the manuscript contains a verse not found in the Khaleghi edition, the corresponding cell is marked by “+” in a dark grey box.

Looking at the pattern of shaded cells that emerge from the table, several observations can be made:

⁸ See for fuller details of the manuscripts, Melville, “Serial killers”, Table 2.

Shahnama Manuscript			Ruhham and Barman, Fifth combat of the Twelve Rukhs (Eleven Rukhs) KM, IV, 121-22, vs. 1896-1910																			
			1 8 9 6	1 8 9 7	1 8 9 8	1 8 9 9	1 9 0 0	1 9 0 a	1 9 0 b	1 9 0 1	1 9 0 2	1 9 0 3	1 9 0 4	1 9 0 4 a	1 9 0 4 b	1 9 0 5	1 9 0 5 a	1 9 0 6	1 9 0 7	1 9 0 8	1 9 0 9	1 9 1 0
Topkapı H. 1479	1330	f. 103v	x	x	x	-	x			x	x	x	x			x		x	x	x	X	-
Cairo 73	1393	f. 136v	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	X	x			x		x	x	x	X	x
St. Petersburg	1440	f. 218v	x	x	x	X	x	+	+	x	x	x	x			x		x	x	x	X	x
Cairo 311	1441	f. 234r	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	+		x	+	x	x	x	X	x
Halle Yb 4 13	1445	f. 204v	x	x	x	-	x			x	x	x	X			x		x	x	x	X	-
Berlin 4255	1489	f. 129v	x	x	x	-	x			x	x	x	x			x		x	x	x	X	x
John Rylands	1518	f. 222v	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x			x		x	x	x	X	x
Shah Tahmasp	1528	f. 342v	x	x	-	x	x			x	x	x	x			x		x	x	x	+	?
Munich Pers 10	16th	f. 326r	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x		+	x		x	x	x	X	x
Berlin 3380	17th	f. 253v	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x			x		x	x	x	X	x
British Library	1614	f. 218v	x	x	x	X	x	+	+	x	x	x	x			x		x	x	x	X	x
NYPLSpencer3	1616	f. 253v	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x			x		x	x	x	X	-
Gulistan	1638	p. 466	x	x	x	X	x			x	x	x	x			x		x	x	x	X	x
John Rylands	1650	f. 230r	x	x	x	-	x			x	x	x	X			x		x	x	x	X	-
St Petersburg	1651	f. 477r	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x			x		x	x	x	X	?
Trinity 1551	1734	f. 297r	x	-	x	x	x			x	x	x	x			x		x	X	x	X	x
Berlin Minutoli	1830	f. 272v	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x			x		x	x	-	X	-
Reza Abbasi	1857	p. 523	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	-			x		x	x	-	X	x
Matched verse	x		Added verse		+	Omitted verse		-	Relocated verse		X											

- The incidence of omitted verses (14) far exceeds the incidence of added verses (8). This result may reflect the fact that omissions are easier to commit than additions, and are therefore more numerous. While omitted verses can mainly be attributed to the occurrence of unconscious errors in the transmission of a text, the introduction of

new verses can only be the result of a deliberate effort from the part of one or other of those preparing the manuscript.⁹

- The added verses tend to be at the centre of the story (between verse numbers 1900 and 1906) while the omitted verses are on the edge. This result may also be expected from the process of manuscript transmission. Regarding omissions, one would expect the calligrapher to be more attentive when writing the salient portion of the text, and less attentive, and therefore more prone to omissions, in the other parts of the story. Vice versa, because added verses do not occur haphazardly and have generally an intended purpose, one would expect that additions should appear where there is a particular interest in the story, i.e., where the passage is salient and the person transmitting the text considers it necessary to add one or more verses to clarify or embellish the story.
- The added verses appear to be more clustered (4 of them forming two clusters of two verses) than omitted verses, which are all isolated, of length 'one'. Omissions are essentially non-intentional errors, newly committed in the manuscript or transmitted from earlier manuscripts. They first occur when a verse is skipped during dictation or transcription as the case may be. Skipping two or more consecutive verses although possible, for example, when an entire line is skipped in a four-column or six-column manuscript, is very unlikely. It is therefore not surprising to see that omitted verses in all the folios of the 18 manuscripts listed in the table above appear as single verses. Added verses, on the other hand, are intended to serve a function. They, therefore, could appear as couples or in longer sequences if the purpose for which they were added was deemed to require two or more verses of elaboration.
- Omissions seem to be more persistent than additions. When an omission first appears in a manuscript, it tends to be repeated in later manuscripts more often than is the case with added verses. Of the 14 omitted verses in the table above, 12 are repeated omissions appearing in more than one manuscript (verse 1910 is omitted in five manu-

⁹ Although relatively less frequent, omissions may also be sometimes deliberate, for example, when some lines are deliberately omitted to allow the text to reach the correct point where the picture is to be inserted, as mentioned in Mehran, "The break-line verse", 153, n. 2.

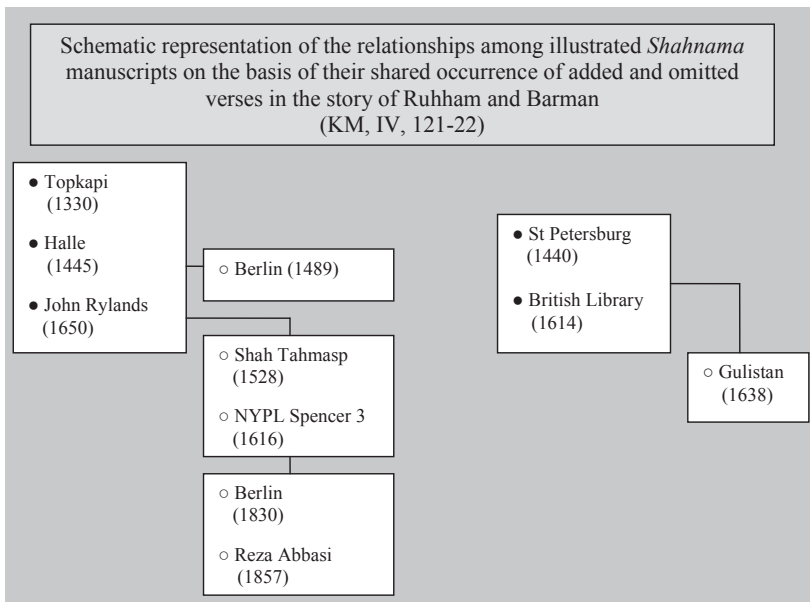
scripts; verse 1899 in four; and verse 1908 in two). In contrast, out of the 8 added verses in the table, only 2 are repeated. These, in fact, concern just one couple of added verses, verses 1900a and 1900b, appearing in two manuscripts.

Relating Manuscripts to Each Other

Omissions and additions are rare events. Therefore, the occurrence of the same omission or addition in two or more manuscripts must be considered to be significant. It may signal a relationship between the manuscripts. They may all come, perhaps, from the same archetype.

In this sense, the data presented above suggests a strong relationship among the manuscripts: Topkapı (1330), Halle (1445) and John Rylands (1650). All are missing the same two verses 1899 and 1910. The last two manuscripts share in addition the same relocated verse 1904. A similar strong relationship can also be observed between St. Petersburg (1440) and British Library (1614). They both share the added verses 1900a and 1900b, and the relocated verse 1899.

An attempt to represent these relationships in a graphical form is made in the following diagram. Weaker relationships with single shared traits seem to exist between manuscripts Berlin Minutoli (1830) and Reza



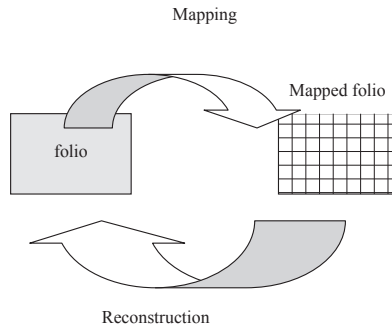
Abbasi (1857); also among Berlin (1489), Shah Tahmasp (1528), Berlin Minutoli (1830) and the first group of manuscripts identified earlier, namely, Topkapı (1330), Halle (1445) and John Rylands (1650); and finally between Gulistan (1638) and the second group of manuscripts identified earlier, St. Petersburg (1440) and British Library (1614).

In the graph, a box with dark dots means a “strong” relationship, a box with light dots a “weak” relationship, and a line connecting two boxes indicates a common element in the relationships.¹⁰

RECONSTRUCTING FOLIOS AND MANUSCRIPTS

Reconstruction as Inverse Operation of Mapping

Reconstruction of a folio or a manuscript may be regarded as the inverse operation of mapping, as shown schematically in the diagram below. Mapping is the operation of replacing each text or non-text element of the folio by a code, a verse number in the case of text elements and a coded colour in the case of non-text elements. For a missing folio or an existing folio with missing elements, reconstruction is the operation of guessing the elements of the folio based on the estimated values of the verse numbers or the estimated positions of the coded colours.



Some examples of reconstruction are given below, using well-known cases of folios tampered with, or missing folios.

¹⁰ The method of grouping together objects with common derived traits is called cladistics, a technique originating in biology, where it is used to determine the evolutionary relationships between different species. See, for example, E. Mayr, “Cladistic analysis or cladistic classification?”, 94-128.

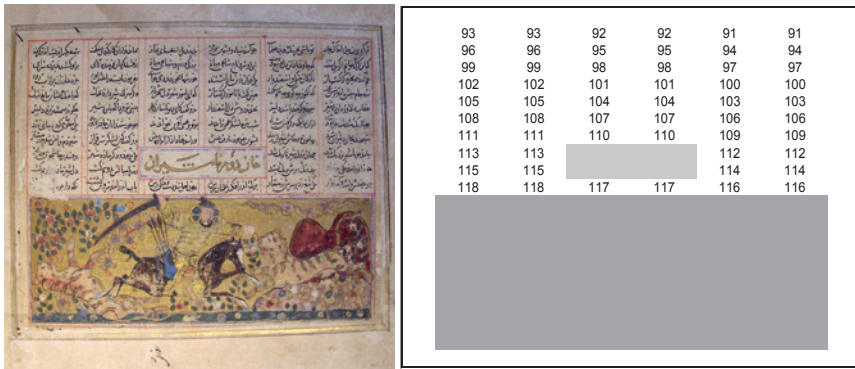


Figure 5. 'Isfandiyar's second trial: He fights the lions'. First Small *Shahnama*, Munich, Emil Preterorius, Inv. N.-11-278, dated c. 1300; KM, V, 227-30, vs. 91-118.



Figure 6. 'Isfandiyar's first trial: He fights the wolves'. First Small *Shahnama*, Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Ms. 104.34r, dated c. 1300; KM, V, 226-27, vs. 82-90.

Reconstructing Half-Folios

Above is a fragment of an illustrated folio in Munich, originally part of the 14th-century First Small *Shahnama* manuscript (fig. 5).¹¹ The image represents Isfandiyar fighting two lions. The fragment, mapped into Khaleghi, runs from verse number 91 to verse number 118 without omissions, additions or relocations.

The Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, also has a fragment attributed to the First Small *Shahnama*, showing Isfandiyar fighting two wolves (fig. 6).

Its mapped folio on the right leaves very little doubt that the two fragments were part of the same folio, as is clear from placing the two fragments next to each other (fig. 7):

There are other illustrated half-folios attributed to the First Small *Shahnama* in the Chester Beatty Library (CB). These are: 'Suhraḥ over-

¹¹ Identified by Shreve Simpson after the publication of Simpson, *The illustration of an epic*, pers. comm.

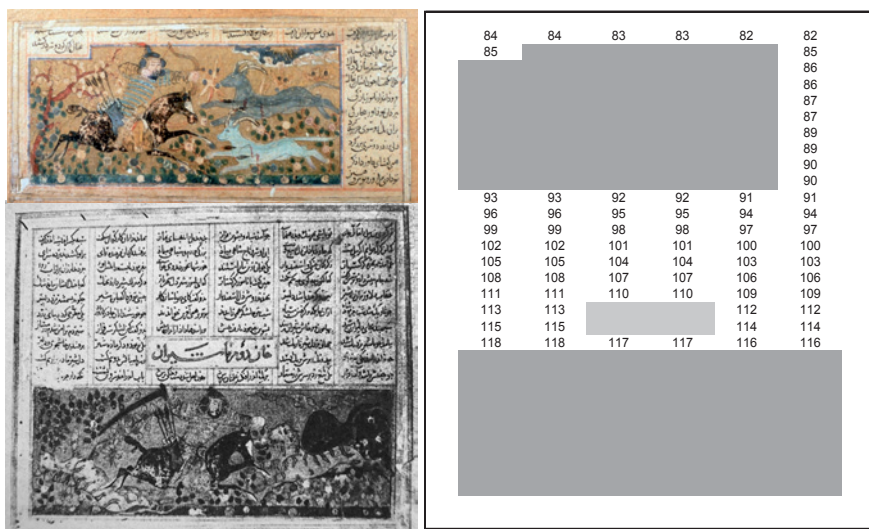


Figure 7. Figures 5 and 6 combined.

turns Rustam' (Ms. 104.11); 'Isfandiyar's sixth trial' (Ms. 104.37); and 'Ardashir pours molten lead down the worm's throat' (Ms. 104.52). One may assume that these fragments were also originally part of some double-image folios that were cut in two and now their other halves are missing.

The scenes painted on the missing halves of the folios may be guessed, based on the verses in the neighbouring half-folios. For example, the missing part of the half-folio CB, Ms. 104.11 most likely contained the image of Rustam killing Suhrab, the commonly painted scene that follows the fight between Rustam and Suhrab.

The reconstructed full-folio is shown below (fig. 8). It is modeled after the existing double-image folio at Metropolitan Museum of Art (69.79.8v and 9v) showing the First trial of Rustam's 'Haft Kh'an' on top, followed by Rustam washing Rakhsh at the bottom.

Similarly, one can reconstruct the other half-folios of the First Small *Shahnama* mentioned earlier. Their missing images are most likely Isfandiyar killing the Simurgh and Ardashir hanging Haftvad and his eldest son Shahuy, respectively, preceding and following the half folios in the Chester Beatty Library (Ms. 104.37 and Ms. 104.52).

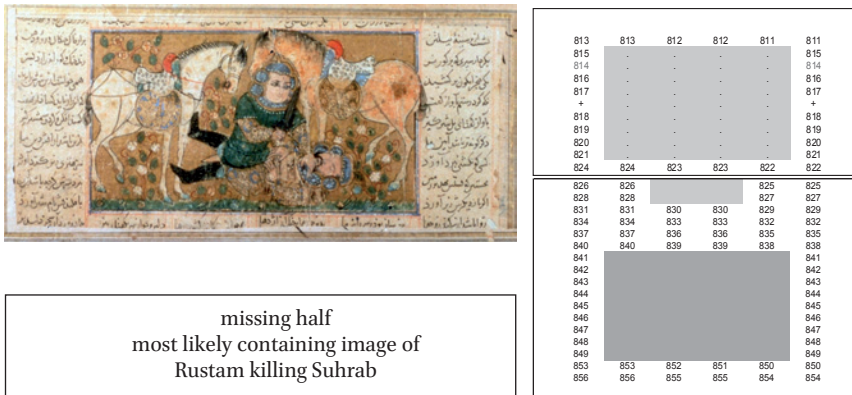


Figure 8. Reconstructed folio: 'Suhrab overturns Rustam', Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Ms. 104.11 and reconstructed missing part 'Rustam killing Suhrab'. First Small *Shahnama*, dated c. 1300; KM, V, 181-85, vs. 811-856.

Reconstructing Split Folios

The next example is from the notorious 14th-century Great Mongol *Shahnama*, better known as the 'Demotte', after the art dealer who dismantled it for profit and badly damaged it at the beginning of the 20th century. The list of extant folios and their locations compiled by Grabar & Blair in 1980 identifies 58 illustrated folios and a few un-illustrated text pages.¹² It updates the inventory prepared by Doris Brian in 1939, which was limited to the illustrated folios.¹³ A more recent study by Sheila Blair suggests that the manuscript was originally in two volumes with about 190 illustrations.¹⁴

One of the extant illustrated folios (Brian 35) is reproduced below showing both its recto (fig. 9) and verso (fig. 10) sides and their corresponding mapping into Khaleghi.

Looking at the mapped folio, one can see that the recto verses do not correspond with the verso. The recto verse numbers run from 1355 to 1399 from the reign of Iskandar, while the verso verses run from 1913 to 2014 of the Great War in the reign of Kay Khusrau.

¹² Oleg Grabar & Sheila Blair, *Epic images and contemporary history. The illustrations of the Great Mongol Shahnama*.

¹³ Doris Brian, "A reconstruction of the miniature cycle in the Demotte *Shah Nameh*", 96-112.

¹⁴ Sheila Blair, "On the track of the 'Demotte' *Shahnama* manuscript", 125-31.

1367	1357	1356	1356	1355	1355
1360	1360	1359	1359	1358	1358
1363	1363	1362	1362	1361	1361
1366	1366	1365	1365	1364	1364
1369	1369	1368	1368	1367	1367
		1371	1371	1370	1370
		1373	1373	1372	1372
		+	+	+	+
		1374	1374	+	+
		1376	1376	1375	1375
		1378	1378	1377	1377
		1380	1380	1379	1379
		1382	1382	1381	1381
		1384	1384	1383	1383
				1385	1385
				1386	1386
				1387	1387
				1388	1388
				1389	1389
				1390	1390
				1391	1391
				1392	1392
				1393	1393
				1394	1394
				1395	1395
				1396	1396
				1397	1397
				1398	1398
				1399	1399
				1399	1399



Figure 9. 'Iskandar arriving at the mountain of Israfil' (Brian 35a top). The Great Mongol *Shahnama*, c. 1335, Paris, Louvre, Inv. 7094. Verse numbers KM, VI, 92-95, pasted on irrelevant page (Brian 35b bottom); KM, IV, 293-99, vs. 1355-1399.

1916	1916	1914	1914	1913	1913
1923	1923	1922	1922	1918	1918
1931	1931	1929	1929	1928	1928
1934	1934	1933	1933	1932	1932
1938	1938	1937	1937	1935	1935
1941	1941	1940	1940	1939	1939
1944	1944	1943	1943	1942	1942
1947	1947	1946	1946	1945	1945
1950	1950	1949	1949	1948	1948
1953	1953	1952	1952	1951	1951
1956	1956	1955	1955	1954	1954
1958	1958			1957	1957
1960	1960			1959	1959
1962	1962			1961	1961
1966	1966	1965	1965	1964	1964
1969	1969	1968	1968	1967	1967
1972	1972	1971	1971	1970	1970
1975	1975	1974	1974	1973	1973
1978	1978	1977	1977	1976	1976
1981	1981	1980	1980	1979	1979
1984	1984	1983	1983	1982	1982
1986	1986	+	+	1985	1985
1989	1989	1988	1988	1987	1987
1991	1991	+	+	1990	1990
1994	1994	1993	1993	1992	1992
1997	1997	1996	1996	1995	1995
2000	2000	1999	1999	1998	1998
2004	2004	2003	2003	2002	2002
2007	2007	2006	2006	2005	2005
2010	2010	2009	2009	2008	2008
2014	2014	2013	2013	2012	2012

Figure 10. The verso side of figure 9, mapped.

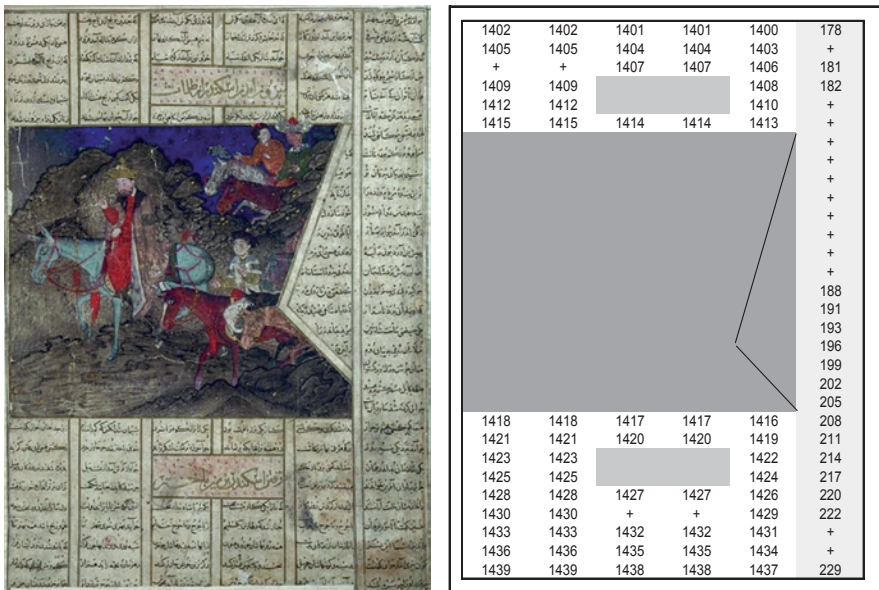


Figure 11. 'Iskandar coming out of the land of darkness' (Brian 36b top). The Great Mongol *Shahnama*, dated c. 1335, Paris, Private Collection; KM, VI, 95-98, vs. 1400-1439. The irrelevant first column (KM, I, 175-229) is pasted on.

The continuation of the verses on Brian 35 can actually be found on Brian 36. The mapping of Brian 36 (fig. 11) shows that the folio starts in the second column with verse number 1400, precisely the verse after the end verse of Brian 35 (verse number 1399). The first column has an irrelevant passage with verses 178 to 229 from the reign of Manuchihr.

The evidence provided by the mapped folios of Brian 35 and Brian 36 is another demonstration of the well-documented fact that the two pages originally formed one folio with two images, one on the recto side (Brian 35) and the other on the verso side (Brian 36). One must assume that at some point in time, the folio was split into two, most likely, to maximize the number of saleable folios, as two folios with one image each would presumably fetch more money than one folio with one image on each side.

Reconstructing Fragmented Folios

Mapping is also a useful tool for pooling together pieces of fragmented folios that have been cut and used in repairing damaged folios. An exam-



+	+	+	+	178	178
180	180	179	179	+	+
+	+	+	+	181	181
184	184	183	183	182	182
185	185	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+	+	+
187	187	186	186	+	+
190	190	189	189	188	188
192	192	+	+	191	191
195	195	194	194	193	193
198	198	197	197	196	196
201	201	200	200	199	199
204	204	203	203	202	202
207	207	206	206	205	205
210	210	209	209	208	208
213	213	212	212	211	211
216	216	215	215	214	214
219	219	218	218	217	217
221	221	+	+	220	220
224	224	223	223	222	222
226	226	225	225	+	+
228	228	227	227	+	+
+	+	230	230	229	229
233	233	232	232	231	231

Figure 12. 'Manuchihr learns about the treatment of Zal by Sam' (text folio). The Great Mongol *Shahnama*, dated c. 1335, Dublin, Chester Beatty Library; KM, I, 175-79, vs. 178-233. First column is now pasted onto Brian 36 (see figure 10). The right-hand (shaded) column verse numbers are reconstructed, based on the adjacent numbers.

ple is the piece of text column on Brian 36 shown earlier. We can see that in the process of splitting the two images on the original folio, the folio suffered important damage, both to the images and to the text. The damaged images were left essentially untouched, while the missing text was replaced with another piece from a different part of the manuscript. The piece used to fill the damaged column of Brian 36 can in fact be identified to be from the text folio presently at the Chester Beatty Library, as shown by its mapping (fig. 12).

The triangular text fragment pasted into the damaged image of Brian 36, as well as the piece of added text pasted at the right bottom corner of Brian 44, can both be identified as belonging also to the Chester Beatty fragment text folio. This folio probably served to repair other damaged folios that had illustrations on them.

Reconstructing Pasted Folios

The process of splitting did not always result successfully in two separate pages each with one image. In a number of cases, the pages and sometimes the images themselves were so badly damaged that they could not



1102	1102	1101	1101	1100	1100
1105	1105	1104	1104	1103	1103
1108	1108	1107	1107	1106	1106
1111	1111	1110	1110	1109	1109
1114	1114	1113	1113	1112	1112
1117	1117	1116	1116	1115	1115
1120	1120	1119	1119	1118	1118
1123	1123	1122	1122	1121	1121
1125	1125	1124	1124	+	+
1128	1128	1127	1127	1126	1126
1130	1130			1129	1129
1132	1132			1131	1131
1135	1135	1134	1134	1133	1133
1137	1137	1136	1136	+	+
1140	1140	1139	1139	1138	1138
1143	1143	1142	1142	1141	1141
1146	1146	1145	1145	1144	1144
1149	1149	1148	1148	1147	1147
1152	1152	1151	1151	1150	1150
1155	1155	1154	1154	1153	1153
1158	1158	1157	1157	1156	1156
1161	1161	1160	1160	1159	1159
1163	1163			1162	1162
1165	1165			1164	1164
1167	1167			1166	1166
1170	1170	1169	1169	1168	1168
1173	1173	1172	1172	1171	1171
1176	1176	1175	1175	1174	1174
1179	1179	1178	1178	1177	1177
1182	1182	1181	1181	1180	1180
1185	1185	1184	1184	1183	1183

Figure 13. 'Iskandar fights the Habash monster' (Brian 33). The Great Mongol *Shahnama*, Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 30.105, dated c. 1335. Image pasted on an irrelevant page from the story of Rustam and Isfandiyar, Zavara and Faramarz fighting with Nush Azar and Mihr Nush; KM, V, 384-92, vs. 1100-1185.

be used as separate entities and had to be discarded or restructured. An example is Brian 33 shown with its mapping on the right panel (fig. 13). The picture at the centre of the page shows the fight of Iskandar with the Habash monster. The text around it, however, is from an earlier part of the *Shahnama*, the story of Rustam and Isfandiyar where Nush Azar and Mihr Nush fight Zavara and Faramarz. The painting was pasted over an irrelevant text page.

This can be clearly seen from the mapping: one can see that the verses starting at 1100 at the top of the page reach the image at verse number 1128 and then run through the picture with 34 verses hidden behind the image, before emerging below the picture with verse number 1162. The difference between 1162 and 1128 is virtually equal to the number of verses that would fill the space behind the picture, thus providing evidence that the image was pasted over a text page that did not have an image in its original form.

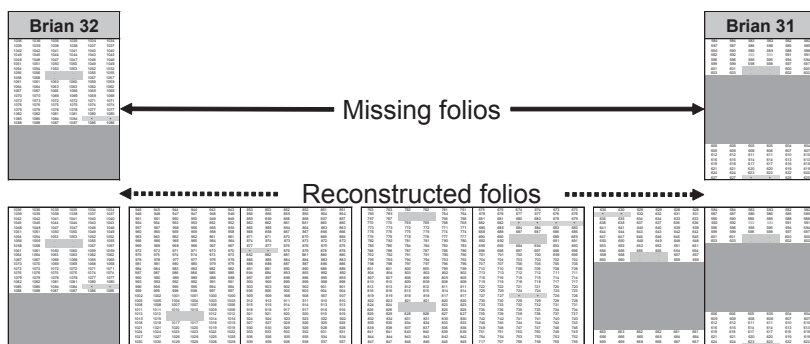
There is one added verse placed between verse number 1135 and 1136 in the text hidden below the image. It is placed there because among the four added verses between verses 1129 and 1161 recorded in the footnotes

The back page of Brian 34 is not available, but in all likelihood it now contains verses from an unrelated part of the *Shahnama*. When split from its original folio, Brian 34 was probably pasted over an unrelated text page. The mapping of the original double-image folio is reproduced (on fig. 14) with the reconstructed Brian 33 as recto and the present Brian 34 as verso.

Reconstructing Missing Folios

Continuing this process of reconstruction of the Great Mongol *Shahnama*, we notice that there is a gap between Brian 31¹⁵ and Brian 32¹⁶. Brian 31 ends with Khaleghi verse number 627 of the Iskandar Chapter while Brian 32 begins with verse number 1034 of the same chapter. There is therefore a gap of 406 Khaleghi verses between them ($1034 - 627 - 1 = 406$).

As a full page of the manuscript contains 93 verses (6 columns x 31 rows/2 = 93), there must at least be 5 missing pages between Brian 31 and Brian 32 ($406/93 = 5$ after rounding up). One of the missing pages must be the back of Brian 31 and the other four must have formed two separate folios now missing. As shown in the diagram below, the reconstruction of the missing pages indicates that they most likely contained in addition to the text, an image and five headings.



The number of verses on the missing pages should be actually accounted for more than the 406 verses calculated earlier. This is because the text of

¹⁵ Brian 31, The Great Mongol *Shahnama*, 'Iskandar killing the Fur of Hind', formerly in the Keirkorian Collection, sold at Sotheby's, London, 23 April 1979, lot 38, now in the Keir Collection.

¹⁶ Brian 32, The Great Mongol *Shahnama*, 'Taynush before Alexander and the visit to the Brahmins', formerly in the Vever Collection, now in the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

the Great Mongol *Shahnama* is slightly longer than the Khaleghi reference edition, having a higher rate of additions than omissions. A more precise estimate of the number of missing verses may be calculated as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{number of missing verses} &= 406 \times (1-r_o)/(1-r_a) \\ &= 406 \times (1-0.01)/(1-0.02) \\ &= 410\end{aligned}$$

where $r_o = 1\%$ and $r_a = 2\%$ are, respectively, the rate of omitted and added verses on the extant folios of the Iskandar chapter of the Great Mongol *Shahnama*.

The total space on the 5 missing pages, measured in terms of equivalent verses, is equal to 465 equivalent verses ($465 = 5 \text{ pages} \times 93 \text{ verses per page}$), 410 of which are filled with actual verses. Thus, the extra space left on the missing pages after accounting for the 410 actual verses is equal to 55 equivalent verses ($465-410$). This space must have been filled with non-verse elements such as image and headings.

The average size of the existing images of the Iskandar chapter in the Great Mongol *Shahnama* is about 45 verses (Brian 28 to Brian 39). Therefore, the missing pages must have contained at most one image, most likely the size of 45 equivalent verses. The remaining non-verse space ($55-45 = 10$) may have been filled with 5 headings of 2 equivalent verses each, as most headings in the existing pages of the manuscript are of this size.

The missing image was in all likelihood on the back of Brian 31, destroyed in the process of splitting the double-image folio to obtain two separate folios with one image each, as in the case of many other folios in the Great Mongol *Shahnama*. If this assumption is correct, the missing image most likely depicted the scene of Iskandar on a pilgrimage to the Ka'ba, in line with the likely contents of the missing verses on the back of Brian 31. In the reconstructed folio shown in the diagram above, the image is placed at the corresponding break-line verse:

Break-line verse of assumed missing image on the back of Brian 31

KM, VI, 50, v. 659	سما عیلیلان زو شده شاد کام	پیاده پیامد به بیت الحرام
WW, IV, 121, para. 16	He visited afoot Baytu'l Haram; The seed of Ismā'il rejoiced in him	

In the reconstruction of the missing pages, one heading is placed just above the image because virtually all existing images of the manuscript have a heading above them. The other four assumed missing headings are placed at the corresponding location of headings or separations of the Khaleghi reference edition. These are:

- Iskandar writes to Queen Qaidafa (verse 690)
- Iskandar goes as an envoy to Qaidafa (verse 766)
- Queen Qaidafa shows Iskandar his portrait (verse 822)
- Iskandar signs a treaty with Queen Qaidafa and returns (verse 1016)

Some 5 added verses and 1 omitted verse are assumed to be on the five missing pages. They are located on the basis of an analysis of the footnotes of the Khaleghi reference edition concerning the relevant passage (verse numbers 628 to 1033), which record 18 added verses, of which only 5 relate to the three manuscripts¹⁷ that share added and omitted verses with the existing Iskandar folios of the Great Mongol *Shahnama*. These assumed added verses are: KM, VI, 48-84, vs. 632+, 681+, 681++, 726+, and 879+.

Among the omitted verses recorded in the footnotes of Khaleghi, only one relates to the three manuscripts sharing omitted verses on the existing Iskandar folios of the Great Mongol *Shahnama*: KM, VI, 59, v. 789.

The accuracy of such detail reconstruction cannot be evaluated unless, of course, the missing folios are eventually found and the contents compared. There is, however, a high degree of certitude that the missing segment between Brian 31 and Brian 32 involved 5 pages with a single missing image.

In their pioneering work on the analysis and reconstruction of the Great Mongol *Shahnama*, Grabar & Blair calculated that there are two missing images between Brian 31 and Brian 32.¹⁸ Their methodology, however, tends to overestimate the number of missing images for a number of reasons:

- It assumes that the size of a typical image is one-third of the page, i.e., about 30 equivalent verses. The average size of the existing images of the Great Mongol manuscript is actually about 40 equivalent verses, and those of the Iskandar chapter even larger, 45 equivalent verses.

¹⁷ London, BL, Add. 18,188, dated 891/1486; Istanbul, TSMK, H. 1510, dated 903/1498; and Oxford University, BOD, Pers. C. 4, dated 894/1489.

¹⁸ Grabar & Blair, *Epic images and contemporary history*, 186.

- The methodology does not account for the existence of headings and other non-verse elements that take up space on the page, nor does it allow for length differences between the text of the manuscript and that of the reference edition.
- Finally, the methodology implicitly assumes a uniform survival rate of the different types of folios. In fact one should expect and evidence also suggests that illustrated folios have a higher survival rate than non-illustrated folios, and among illustrated folios, folios with images on both sides have a higher survival rate than folios with single images.

The reconstruction procedure based on the method of mapping described in the present paper is formulated in a more rigorous statistical framework in a separate paper, where it is applied to volume 2 of the Great Mongol *Shahnama* in its entirety.¹⁹ Those results also show a single missing image between Brian 31 and Brian 32.

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¹⁹ Farhad Mehran, "Missing paintings in dismantled Persian manuscripts", 61-78.

SHAHNAMA KINGS AND HEROES IN 'AJA'IB AL-MAKHLUQAT ILLUSTRATED MANUSCRIPTS*

Bilha Moor

The literary genre '*Aja'ib al-makhlukat* (Wonders of Creation) is encyclopaedic in nature, and provides information on the celestial and the earthly spheres. All things created by God, be it a constellation, an animal, a tree or a fantastic being, are conceived as a wonder. One of the most prominent features of the '*Aja'ib* treatises is the combination of reality and fantasy, for alongside semi-scientific data on the signs of the zodiac or the qualities of a certain fruit, descriptions are found of fanciful inhabitants of faraway islands, or of fabulous beasts.

Illustrated '*Aja'ib* manuscripts are usually enriched by hundreds of miniatures whose subjects vary from angels and celestial bodies to fauna, flora and wondrous creatures. The first illustrated '*Aja'ib* manuscript, produced in the late 13th century under the rule of the Mongols, was conceived as a sort of medieval encyclopaedia, and was probably influenced by European illustrated *Bestiaries*.¹ Most of its paintings illustrate the chapters on celestial bodies, animals and plants, and in that it corresponds to contemporary Islamic illustrated manuscripts of treatises such as *Kitab suwar al-kawakib al-thabita* (Book on the Images of the Fixed

* This paper is a very small part of my Ph.D. dissertation, dedicated to a group of 16th-century illustrated manuscripts of Tusi's '*Aja'ib al-makhlukat*, completed at the Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, under the supervision of Prof. Rachel Milstein.

¹ Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek [hereafter BS], Ms. cod. arab. 464, dated 678/1280, see Richard Ettinghausen, *Arab painting*, 138-40. The manuscript was the subject of two Ph.D. dissertations: Hans-Caspar G. von Bothmer, "Die illustrationen der 'Münchener Qazwini' von 1280"; and Persis D. Berlekamp, "Wonders and their images in late medieval Islamic culture: 'The Wonders of Creation' in Fars and Iraq 1280-1388", 39-89, 208-43. For a classic study on common wonders between East and West see Rudolf Wittkower, "Marvels of the East: A study in the history of monsters", 159-97.

Stars) of al-Sufi,² *De materia medica* of Dioscorides,³ and *Kitab manafi'-i hayawan* (On the Benefits of Animals) of Ibn Bakhtishu'.⁴

Cultural and historical changes introduced new encyclopaedia-type entries and topics into the later illustrated manuscripts of the '*Aja'ib* genre. These new subjects included images of the prophets of Islam, depictions of various cities, pre-Islamic Persian figures known from Firdausi's *Shahnama* (Book of Kings) and Nizami's *Khamasa* (Quintet), and more. In this chapter I focus on *Shahnama* kings and heroes who appear in illustrated '*Aja'ib* manuscripts, and inquire about the role they play in them. In an attempt to answer this question, I discuss three treatises of the '*Aja'ib* genre and their illustrated manuscripts dating mainly from the late 13th century and the second half of the 16th century.

QAZVINI'S '*AJA'IB AL-MAKHLUQAT*

The most popular of the three treatises is '*Aja'ib al-makhlukat wa ghara'ib al-maujudat* (Wonders of Creation and Oddities of Existing Things) by the Qadi and cosmographer Zakariya al-Qazwini (Qazvini).⁵ It was written in Arabic in the 13th century, and translated into Persian and Turkish in the following centuries. The treatise was repeatedly copied and illustrated from the late 13th until the 19th century in different parts of the Muslim empires of Ottoman Turkey, Iran and India.

Qazvini's text is divided into two main parts: the heavenly spheres and the earthly spheres. Based on Islamic and Greek scientific traditions, the first part is dedicated to the angels, planets, constellations and the twelve signs of the zodiac. The second part is dedicated to the earthly world and contains information on seas, islands and water creatures, and gives a comprehensive alphabetical survey of mountains, rivers, animals and plants. The compilation ends with a sub-chapter that lives up to the title

² On a corpus of illustrated manuscripts of this treatise see Emmy Wellesz, "An early al-Sufi manuscript in the Bodleian Library in Oxford: A study in Islamic constellation images", 1-26.

³ See for example Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi [hereafter TSMK], Ahmet III 2127. The manuscript is listed in Filiz Çağman & Zeren Tanındı, *The Topkapı Sarayı Museum: The albums and illustrated manuscripts*, 31-32, cat. no. 16-19.

⁴ New York, The Pierpont Morgan Library, M. 500. The manuscript is listed in: Barbara Schmitz, *Islamic and Indian manuscripts and paintings in the Pierpont Morgan Library*, 9-24, cat. no. 1.

⁵ For Qazvini's biography and works, see *Encyclopaedia of Islam*² s.v. "al-Kazwini, Zakariya b. Muhammad b. Mahmud Abu Yahya" (T. Lewicki); Syrinx von Hees, *Enzyklopädie als spiegel des weltbildes*.

of the book and is dedicated to marvels such as hybrid creatures and unusual beings.⁶

Arabic manuscripts. Three *Shahnama* kings appear in Qazvini's Arabic illustrated manuscripts: The Sasanian kings Khusrau Anushirvan and Khusrau Parviz, and Iskandar (Alexander the Great). Khusrau Parviz is depicted, for example, in the subchapter on mountains, under the entry for Mount Bisutun (*jabal bisutun*). The story on the rock-relief, which was carved by the love-struck Farhad for the Armenian princess Shirin, is of course well known from illustrated manuscripts of Nizami's *Khamasa* rather than those of the *Shahnama*, so I shall not go into it in this chapter.⁷

Iskandar makes up part of the entry *jazirat al-tinnin* (Dragon Island), which according to Qazvini lies in the Indian Ocean. The author relates that a fearsome dragon once lived in the island, and would destroy the islanders' houses and possessions if two bulls were not provided for it every day as its nourishment. When Iskandar reached the island and heard these complaints he helped the people get rid of the dragon by a cunning trick. He ordered the preparation of two bulls, whose skin would be filled with sulphur and iron hooks. When the dragon was about to devour the bulls, the fire was lit and the hooks sank into its body. The inhabitants then found the dragon dead, and as a token of their appreciation gave Iskandar a gift: a creature resembling a yellow hare with a black horn.⁸

An illustration to this story appears in the first known Arabic manuscript of Qazvini, produced in 1280 during his lifetime.⁹ In this composition, the dragon is depicted at the crucial moment of devouring the sulphur-filled bulls, which look like a red piece of meat. Later Arabic cop-

⁶ For published editions of the text see Zakariya al-Qazwini, *'Aja'ib al-makhluqat wa ghara'ib al-maw'uidat*, ed. Farouk Saad; Ferdinand Wüstenfeld, ed. *Zakariya Ben Muhammed Ben Mahmud el-Cazwini's Kosmographie*.

⁷ On the illustrations of this topic see Priscila Soucek, "Farhad and Taq-i Bustan: The growth of a legend", 27-53.

⁸ The story as told here is based on the reading of two illustrated Arabic manuscripts of Qazvini's text: first, St. Petersburg, The Institute of Oriental Manuscripts [hereafter IOM], Ms. D370 (988/1580), f. 64r. On this manuscript and its cycle of illustrations see Bilha Moor & Efim A. Rezvan, "al-Qazwini's *'Aja'ib al-Makhluqat wa Ghara'ib al-Mawjudat*: Manuscript D370", 38-68, esp. p. 50, and front cover. Secondly (see fig. 1, pl. 23) Washington, D.C., The Freer Gallery of Art [hereafter FGA], Ms. FGA 54, f. 61r, see Juliee A. Badiiee, *An Islamic cosmography: The illustrations of the Sarre Qazwini*, 113-14, pl. 30.

⁹ BS, Ms. cod. arab. 464, f. 63r. See note 1.

ies depict both the dragon and the golden hare presented to Iskandar (fig. 1).¹⁰

Persian manuscripts. The entry for 'Dragon Island' also appears in the Persian versions of Qazvini's text. Sixteenth-century Persian illustrated manuscripts provide two different interpretations of this episode. One relies on the earliest Arabic manuscript, by depicting the dragon devouring the bull.¹¹ The second, however, is more complex and appears on a double-spread folio with two separate illustrations (fig. 2, pl. 24).¹² On the right (verso) side, the dragon is about to devour the two bulls in the foreground, while Iskandar and his men watch the scene from behind a wall in the upper plane. The miniature on the left (recto) side shows an islander offering Iskandar the fabulous hare. These illustrations elaborate upon the iconography in the later Arabic copies (fig. 1). The subject-matter of the entry in the Arabic copies is set against the background of the folio, thus emphasizing the encyclopaedic nature of the text. The illustrations of the Persian manuscripts, on the other hand, transform this into a narrative scene taking place on Dragon Island, and incorporate several figures, including Iskandar, who was missing from the Arabic copies.

In the *Shahnama*, the story of Iskandar and the dragon is set forth as an integral part of his life and travels.¹³ Firdausi's version is somewhat different, being longer and more detailed than Qazvini's. According to the *Shahnama*, Iskandar and his men tried to defeat the dragon twice: first they shot arrows at it, but this stratagem did not work. Then they filled five skinned cows with poison. When the dragon ate them, the toxin spread through its body and it was finally laid low by another hail of arrows. Illustrations of this episode in *Shahnama* manuscripts usually depict Iskandar's men shooting arrows at the dragon, for example, in the

¹⁰ The folios of the manuscript are kept in two collections: FGA, Ms. FGA 54.33-114, 57-13; and The New York Public Library, Spencer, Pers. Ms. 45. The date and place of production of this manuscript, which is also known as 'the Sarre Qazvini', are debatable. See Badi'e, *An Islamic cosmography*, and "The Sarre Qazvini: An early Aq Quyunlu manuscript?", 97-113; Stefano Carboni, "The Arabic manuscripts", 86-91; Schmitz, *Islamic manuscripts in the New York Public Library*, 7-13.

¹¹ For example, TSMK, H. 407 (967/1560), f. 106v. The manuscript is listed in Fehmi E. Karatay, *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi: Farsça yazmalar kataloğu*, 75, cat. no. 196.

¹² TSMK, H. 403 (976/1568-69), ff. 88v-89r. Karatay, *Farsça yazmalar kataloğu*, 75, cat. no. 197.

¹³ See the relevant text in the *Shahnama* edition of Jules Mohl [hereafter M], III, 1420-22, vs. 1215-1262.

Great Mongol *Shahnama*,¹⁴ or the dragon devouring the cows in the presence of Iskandar and his men.¹⁵

Since Firdausi's *Shahnama* anticipated Qazvini's text by more than two hundred years, Qazvini was presumably inspired by the *Shahnama* story. He possibly captured its essence, made some changes to it, crowned it with the title *jazirat al-tinnin* (Dragon Island), which is non-existent in the *Shahnama*, and integrated it into his encyclopaedia in the subchapter on seas and islands.

That said, the first known illustration to the story of Iskandar and the dragon is the one that appears in the late 13th-century Arabic *'Aja'ib*.¹⁶ This illustration may have served as a preliminary model for both the Persian *'Aja'ib* manuscripts and the *Shahnama* illustrations in which the dragon devours the bulls. Yet the *Shahnama* illustrations, which usually depict Iskandar and his men in addition to the dragon, might have inspired the 16th-century Persian *'Aja'ib* painters to add the king and his entourage to the traditional depiction of the dragon and the bulls. But note that the golden one-horned hare in Qazvini's text is not mentioned by Firdausi, and was accordingly not illustrated in the *Shahnama* manuscripts.

Several other *Shahnama* heroes and kings appear in some 16th-century Persian illustrated manuscripts of Qazvini's *'Aja'ib*, especially in the subchapter on the 'customs of the Persians', which did not exist in Qazvini's Arabic text. This addition indicates that the original Arabic encyclopaedia was broadened and adapted to the interests of the patrons of that period.¹⁷ One example is Shah Kayumars, who in some *'Aja'ib* manuscripts is depicted seated in the centre of the composition, surrounded by his entourage, all wearing leopard skins.¹⁸ The scene of Kayumars enthroned is one of the most celebrated illustrations in *Shahnama* manuscripts,¹⁹ probably due to the fact that he was the first king, and pre-

¹⁴ London, Keir Collection, Ms. XO1 (c. 1335), f. 172v. The image is available on the *Shahnama Project's database* [hereafter SNP].

¹⁵ Dublin, The Chester Beatty Library, Ms. Per. 214 (955/1548), II, f. 158v. The image is available on the SNP's database. See also M. Minovi, *et al.*, *The Chester Beatty Library: A catalogue of the Persian manuscripts and miniatures*, II, 79-83.

¹⁶ See note 9.

¹⁷ On the Persian versions of Qazvini's text and their added entries see Karin Rührdanz, "Illustrated Persian *'Aja'ib al-Makhluqat* manuscripts and their function in early modern times", 34-47, esp. 39.

¹⁸ See for example: TSMK, H. 407, f. 298r.

¹⁹ According to the SNP database, 130 illustrations of this scene have already been recorded (as at June 2010).

sumably because his description in the poem as living in the mountains and wearing leopard skins was favourable for the painters, who repeatedly followed the same iconography in their illustrations of this scene.²⁰ Excluding Firdausi's preface, which is usually illustrated by not more than two scenes, if at all, the court of Kayumars is the first depiction after the start of the poem. The iconography of this scene as it appears in the '*Aja'ib*' manuscripts clearly derives from that represented in many *Shahnama* manuscripts.

Another noteworthy hero who is depicted in some of Qazvini's 16th-century Persian '*Aja'ib*' manuscripts is Rustam. Like Shah Kayumars, he also appears in the sub-chapter on the customs of the Persians. In fig. 3,²¹ Rustam is seen stabbing or lifting a horseman with his spear. The Persian hero is portrayed with his usual attributes, as described and depicted in *Shahnama* manuscripts. The iconography of this scene is also borrowed from *Shahnama* illustrations, even though it is not possible to determine the exact one, for the name of Rustam's opponent is not indicated in the '*Aja'ib*'. Nevertheless, Qazvini includes some citations from the *Shahnama* and ascribes them to Firdausi,²² the first verse being identical to a *Shahnama* verse on the combat of Rustam and Shangul.²³ This also happens to be the break-line verse before the illustration to the scene 'Rustam lifts Shangul from his saddle' in several *Shahnama* manuscripts.²⁴ It is therefore likely that both author and the artist had this episode in mind.²⁵ According to the iconography, another possible comparison with a *Shahnama* episode is 'Rustam kills Alkus in combat',²⁶ for both scenes depict Rustam stabbing/lifting his rivals with a spear in a similar manner. The posture of the horseman also recalls another often-depicted *Shahnama* scene, 'Rustam lifts Afrasiyab from his saddle'.²⁷

²⁰ M, I, 15-16, vs. 1-30.

²¹ TSMK, H. 402 (985/1577), f. 181v. Karatay, *Farsça yazmalar kataloğu*, 75-76, cat. no. 198.

²² See the first two lines in fig. 3. These lines also appear in other Persian illustrated mss. of Qazvini's text, e.g. TSMK, H. 410 (884/1479), f. 273v; and H. 411 (c. end of the 15th century), f. 84v. In The Royal Asiatic Society, Ms. 178 (c. 1475), f. 283r, only the second verse, which comes from a different story (Tahmina's words to the young Suhrab) is quoted, from M, II, 329, v. 149, see Barbara Brend & Charles Melville, *Epic of the Persian Kings*, no. 57.

²³ M, II, 732, v. 557.

²⁴ See for example, BL, Add. 18188 (891/1486), f. 158r; Cambridge University Library, Or. 420 (841/1437), f. 191v. The images are available on the SNP database.

²⁵ M, II, 731-33, vs. 547-590.

²⁶ M, II, 319-21, vs. 710-752.

²⁷ M, I, 235, vs. 49-60.



Figure 3. 'Rustam lifts Shargol from his saddle'. *'Aja'ib al-makhlūqat* by Qazvini (Persian), Topkapı Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, H. 402, fol. 181v. By kind permission of the Topkapı Saray Museum.

Another borrowing of a narrative nature from the *Shahnama* can be exemplified by the hunting scene of the Sasanian king Bahram Gur. A 16th-century miniature from Qazvini's *'Aja'ib*, in Persian, depicts Bahram Gur performing his archery skills in the fore plane.²⁸ The king is being observed by his beloved Azada, who rides a horse and plays the harp in the second plane. This episode is not included in the Arabic *'Aja'ib*, but it is depicted in many of the Persian copies, probably because this love story and its tragic ending is well known and illustrated not only in many

²⁸ TSMK, H. 402, f. 181r.

Shahnama manuscripts but also in Nizami's *Khamasa*. The penetration of Persian stories into the translations of the Arabic '*Aja'ib* encyclopaedia may betray a need to update and adjust the original text to the taste of the Iranian reader, who was familiar with the Persian epics.

TUSI'S '*AJA'IB AL-MAKHLUQAT*'

The second treatise bearing the same title '*Aja'ib al-makhlukat* was written in Persian by Muhammad al-Tusi (Tusi), sometime after the mid-12th century, and it is divided into ten chapters.²⁹ Like Qazvini, Tusi sets out the world's components, beginning with the heavenly spheres and continuing with the geographical, anthropological and zoological features on earth. Still, Tusi's treatise differs from Qazvini's '*Aja'ib* by additional chapters and entries, which contain rich mythological narratives on Islamic prophets, towns, mosques and pre-Islamic Persian heroes.³⁰

Although it anticipates Qazvini's text by a century, the earliest known illustrated manuscript of Tusi was copied towards the end of the 14th century.³¹ Several Islamic prophets, such as Ibrahim, Yunus, Musa and Muhammad, as well as Persian kings like Iskandar, Kay Kavus and Kay Khusrau are illustrated in it. These topics correspond with other 14th-century illustrated manuscripts of an historical nature, such as Rashid al-Din's *Jami' al-tawarikh* (Assembly of Histories)³² and Firdausi's *Shahnama*.³³

²⁹ Katip Celebi Haji Khalifa (d. 1657), the Ottoman scholar, wrote in the bibliographical encyclopaedia on the names of books and sciences, that Tusi's compilation was composed in the year 555/c.1160, and that it is an illustrated book. See his *Kashf al-zunun 'an asami al-kutub wa'l-funun*, 1127. See also Jan Rypka, *History of Iranian literature*, 461; Charles A. Storey, *Persian literature: A bio-bibliographical survey*, II, Part 1, 121.

³⁰ For a printed edition of Tusi's treatise see Muhammad al-Tusi, '*Aja'ib al-makhlukat wa ghara'ib al-maujudat*, ed. Manuchihr Sutuda.

³¹ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France [hereafter BNF], Suppl. persan 332, probably produced in Baghdad, 1388. See Francis Richard, *Splendeurs persanes: Manuscrits du XIIIe au XVIIe siècle*, 71, cat. no. 33; Henri Massé, *Les livres des merveilles du monde*. For a complete list of illustrations of the manuscript see Berlekamp, 'Wonders and their images in late medieval Islamic culture', 278-307.

³² For example, Edinburgh University Library, Ms. Arab. 20. See David T. Rice, *The illustrations to the 'World History' of Rashid al-Din*; Sheila S. Blair, *A compendium of chronicles: Rashid al-Din's illustrated history of the world*.

³³ Among the 14th-century illustrated *Shahnamas* are a few dispersed manuscripts such as the 'Great Mongol *Shahnama*', the so-called 'first and second small *Shahnamas*', and the 1341 Inju'id *Shahnama* commissioned by the Vizier Qavam al-Din. See Marianna S. Simpson, *The illustration of an epic: The earliest Shahnama manuscripts*; Linda

Apparently, no other illustrated manuscript of Tusi's text was produced for almost two hundred years, not until the second half of the 16th century.³⁴ Then a few manuscripts were copied with miniatures of a specific style, similar to that of a group of *Qisas al-anbiya'* (Stories of the Prophets)³⁵ and truncated *Shahnama* manuscripts produced in an unspecified Ottoman school.³⁶

The cycle of illustrations in the 16th-century group seems to rely on the 14th-century manuscript, albeit with some changes. The 16th-century group evinces a growing attraction to myth by depicting additional stories about *Shahnama* heroes and Islamic prophets that did not appear in the 14th-century precedent. A fine example is the illustration of Prince Siyavush. Firdausi relates that Siyavush, son of Shah Kay Kavus, was obliged to undergo an ordeal of fire after he had been falsely accused of seducing his stepmother, Sudaba. The '*Aja'ib*' painter shows Siyavush passing through fire, while his father observes the scene from the background plane (fig. 4, pl. 25),³⁷ an iconography that is well known from numerous *Shahnama* manuscripts. But while this story in the *Shahnama* forms part of the plot in the chapter on Siyavush,³⁸ in Tusi's 16th-century manuscripts it illustrates the cosmic element of fire. Fire as a topic was never portrayed in manuscripts of Qazvini, but in Tusi's manuscripts several stories are connected to the cosmic element, thus broadening the encyclopaedic nature of the '*Aja'ib*'.

The narrative nature of Tusi's manuscripts as compared with Qazvini's can well be exemplified by a folio from Qazvini's chapter on reptiles and insects, in which two entries are illustrated, the snake or dragon (*thu'ban*) and the locust (*jarad*).³⁹ The creatures are depicted by themselves, set against the background. In the entry *thu'ban* in Tusi's parallel chapter

Komaroff and Stefano Carboni, eds., *The legacy of Genghis Khan: Courtly art and culture in Western Asia, 1256-1353*.

³⁴ Karin Rührdanz dedicates an article to one of Tusi's late 16th-century mss and includes its list of illustrations, see: "An Ottoman illustrated version of Muhammad al-Tusi's '*Aja'ib al-Makhlūqat*', 455-75.

³⁵ On this group see Rachel Milstein, Karin Rührdanz & Barbara Schmitz, *Stories of the prophets: Illustrated manuscripts of Qisas al-anbiya'*.

³⁶ Rührdanz, "About a group of truncated *Shahnamas*: A case study in the commercial production of illustrated manuscripts in the second part of the sixteenth century", 118-34. One of the manuscripts which belongs to this group is the so-called 'Eckstein *Shahnama*', see Will Kwiatkowski, *The Eckstein Shahnama: An Ottoman Book of Kings*.

³⁷ TSMK, H. 404 (984/1577), f. 46v. Karatay, *Farsça yazmalar kataloğu*, 76-77, cat. no. 201.

³⁸ M, II, 405-8, vs. 502-561.

³⁹ IOM, D370, f. 219r. See note 8.

(fig. 5, pl. 26),⁴⁰ the dragon is not depicted as an encyclopaedia-type entry but is an integral part of the *Shahnama* story of Isfandiyar's third labour, in which he fights the dragon, from the chapter on the reign of Gushtasp.⁴¹ Similar composition and iconography are present in a contemporary truncated *Shahnama* manuscript.⁴² Other *Shahnama* topics which appear in Tusi's '*Aja'ib*' and in the truncated Ottoman *Shahnamas* depict similar iconographies.

Iskandar's travels and encounters are interwoven in several chapters of Tusi's 16th-century manuscripts. From reading his '*Aja'ib*', it seems that Iskandar, through the places he visited and the creatures he encountered, is taking us, the readers, on a journey. For example, in the entry on Mount Qaf, which surrounds the world, he is seen encountering an angel who clings to the mountain.⁴³ The wall he built to keep the people of Yajuj wa Majuj (Gog and Magog) at bay is mentioned and illustrated twice in the chapter on towns and regions,⁴⁴ as is his journey to the land of darkness,⁴⁵ and likewise many more. Not surprisingly perhaps, Iskandar is a dominant figure in the '*Aja'ib*', for he was the ultimate traveller, who explored the world and its wonders. Moreover, many of the episodes in the *Shahnama*'s chapter on Iskandar's reign present characters or creatures that also appear in the '*Aja'ib*' genre, for example, Iskandar's encounter with the archangel Israfil.⁴⁶ Israfil and the trumpet he will blow to resurrect the dead on Judgment Day are illustrated in all '*Aja'ib al-makhlūqat*' manuscripts, Qazvini's and Tusi's alike, in the chapter on the celestial bodies.⁴⁷

IBN ZUNBUL'S *QANUN AL-DUNYA*

The third and later treatise of the *mirabilis* genre is *Kitab qanun al-dunya wa 'aja'ibuha min mashriqiha li-maghribiha* (The Book on the Order of the World and its Wonders from East to West). It was composed in Arabic,

⁴⁰ TSMK, H. 401 (ca. 1577), f. 256v. Karatay, *Farsça yazmalar kataloğu*, 77, cat. no. 202.

⁴¹ M, III, 1204-6, vs. 1663-1714.

⁴² 'Isfandiyar fights the dragon', *Shahnama* by Firdausi, Oxford, All Souls College, Ms. 288 (988/1580), f. 331r. The image is available on the SNP's database.

⁴³ See for example TSMK, H. 401, f. 95v.

⁴⁴ See for example TSMK, H. 404, ff. 106r, 115r.

⁴⁵ See for example Baltimore, The Walters Art Museum, W. 593 (c. 1585-90), f. 107v.

⁴⁶ M, III, 1430-31, vs. 1425-1448. For an illustrated example, see *Shahnama* by Firdausi, BNF, Suppl. persan 489 (953/1546), f. 352r. The image is available on the SNP database.

⁴⁷ See for example '*Aja'ib al-makhlūqat*' by Tusi, TSMK, H. 404, f. 18v.

and copied and illustrated by the historian and geomancer Ibn Zunbul al-Mahalli in Ottoman Cairo in 970/1563.⁴⁸ The first and main part of his book is devoted to local history and describes various cities and their notable monuments. Similarly to Qazvini's and Tusi's *'Aja'ib*, other chapters of Ibn Zunbul's compilation are dedicated to the constellations, fauna and flora.

Many of the manuscript's illustrations seem to rely heavily on early Arabic models rather than Persian ones. Among these are manuscripts of *De materia medica*, *Suwar al-kawakib al-thabita*, and al-Mubashshir's treatise on the Greek sages (*Mukhtar al-hikam*). Still, Ibn Zunbul illustrates some topics and monuments connected to Egypt and its myths, perhaps for the first time in the history of Islamic miniature painting. Fine examples are the death of Queen Cleopatra, who is depicted either breast-feeding a snake or mortally bitten by it,⁴⁹ or many of the pharaohs described and portrayed in the chapter on the kings of Egypt, some of whom are seen resting in peace in their pyramids.⁵⁰

Aside from his emphasis on local Egyptian history, Ibn Zunbul incorporated a few of the Persian *Book of King's* characters in his illustrated book. Yet their appearance in his *Qanun al-dunya* is minor compared with Qazvini's and especially Tusi's manuscripts. In the entry on Yemen, for example, the tyrant Zahhak is readily recognized by the two snakes that spring from his shoulders and devour two children.⁵¹ Ibn Zunbul dedicates an entire chapter to Iskandar, probably because of his historical connection to Egypt. He also illustrates him several times, alone or with his predecessor, King Dara, and the prophet Khidr.⁵²

The first miniatures discussed in this chapter are those illustrating the story of 'Dragon Island' in Qazvini's *'Aja'ib* and Firdausi's *Shahnama* manuscripts. Ibn Zunbul mentions Qazvini in his treatise, and certain illustrations in his book leave little doubt that he was familiar with both the Arabic and the Persian illustrated manuscripts of Qazvini's text. In Ibn

⁴⁸ The only known illustrated manuscript of this treatise is TSMK, R. 1638. It is listed in Karatay, *Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi: Arabça Yazmalar kataloğu*, III, 591, cat. no. 6562. The style of the illustrations was briefly discussed by Ettinghausen, *Arab painting*, 180-82, and by Duncan Haldane, *Mamluk painting*, 56. The most comprehensive work on the manuscript up to date is by Rachel Milstein & Bilha Moor, "Wonders of a changing world: Late illustrated *'Aja'ib* manuscripts (part I)", 1-48.

⁴⁹ TSMK, Ms. R. 1638, f. 278v.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, ff. 202v, 203v, 206v.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, f. 24v.

⁵² *Ibid.*, ff. 270v, 274v.



Figure 6. 'Dragon Island'. *Qanun al-dunya* by Ibn Zunbul, Topkapı Saray Museum Library, Istanbul, R. 1638, fol. 15v. By kind permission of the Topkapı Saray Museum.

Zunbul's depiction of Dragon Island (fig. 6),⁵³ not only is the dragon seen swallowing the sulphur-filled bulls, but Iskandar's gift, the golden one-horned hare, is also visible in a side frame.⁵⁴

The miniatures presented in this chapter lead to the conclusion that the '*Aja'ib*' genre does not function as a mere encyclopaedia of knowledge. It may have started as such, but historical and social changes soon developed a public interest in mythological and narrative episodes. As a result, new chapters and entries were added to Qazvini's and Tusi's '*Aja'ib*', which are closer in character to the heroic and romantic poems of that age. Moreover, scenes from the *Shahnama* that were illustrated in the '*Aja'ib*' manuscripts were usually the more popular ones, or those that could be

⁵³ *Ibid.*, f. 15v.

⁵⁴ It should be noted that this subject does not appear in any of Tusi's illustrated mss.

found in manuscripts of more than one treatise; examples are the hunting scene of Bahram Gur and Azada, which is illustrated in the *Shahnama* as well as Nizami's *Haft Paikar*, or the tyrant Zahhak, who is depicted in the *Shahnama* but also in *Jami' al-tawarikh*, and particularly the travels and adventures of Iskandar. The *Shahnama* stories enliven the encyclopaedic character of Qazvini's text. In most cases the 'Aja'ib artists also copied the main features of the iconography presented in the *Shahnama* manuscripts. Judging by the number of illustrated stories of *Shahnama* characters in Tusi's manuscripts, entries on mountains, rivers, or animals sometimes seem merely an excuse to illustrate narrative scenes that correspond with other popular illustrated treatises.

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PART FOUR

ORAL TRADITIONS: FIELD REPORTS

SISTANI LEGENDS ABOUT RUSTAM AND HIS DESCENDANTS

Ivan Steblin-Kamensky

More than thirty years ago, I and my senior friend and close colleague the late Alexander Gruenberg (1930–95), were conducting an investigation of local languages and dialects, travelling along the former Soviet border with Afghanistan and Iran (the present territory of independent Turkmenia). It was almost impossible then for Soviet scholars to go on expeditions abroad, but inside the country we were quite free and even adequately supported financially. Alexander Gruenberg first visited the area in 1958, 1959 and 1960, collecting materials on different Iranian languages and dialects (partly published later in a series of articles).¹ In the small town of Sarakhs on the Soviet side of the border he became acquainted with a certain semi-professional storyteller, Ismail son of Yarmamad, an emigrant from the Afghan province of Sistan. The first tape recordings were made at that time of specimens of the Sistani (self-denomination *sistuni*) dialect of Persian. Among these recordings were some legends and stories about the *Shahnama* hero Rustam and his descendants Barzu, Azarbarzu and others. They seemed so interesting and unique that when working as an interpreter in Afghanistan during the sixties, Alexander always wanted to return to Turkmenian Sarakhs to investigate the matter.

Alexander's dream came true 15 years later in February 1975, when we arrived in Sarakhs together to work specially with Ismail.

At that time there was a multi-ethnic population in Turkmenian Sarakhs: Turkmens, Persians (Sistani Persians, also Jamshidis), Russians and Germans (German colonists who migrated to Sarakhs from Central Russia in the 19th century), with scattered Baluchis and Pashtuns, were all living together quite peacefully. The Germans were repairing roofs, cars and TV sets, the Turkmens were tending cattle, cooking their favourite dish, *beshbarmak*, and managing party and administrative institutions, the Persians were engaged in agriculture—and all of them venerated a local place of worship and pilgrimage, the ruins of the great

¹ See I.M. Steblin-Kamensky, "Alexander Leonovich Gryunberg", 22-29 (bibliography).

mausoleum of Sarakhs-baba on the site of the old town of Sarakhs, famous in the medieval history of Persia.

During our two-week sojourn in Sarakhs in 1975 we recorded on tape and checked with our informants in a preliminary way a considerable amount of folklore materials—fairy tales, legends, narratives and anecdotes. The chief informant was a local resident, Ismail Yarmamadov, born in 1915; he was then 60 years old, in good health, and although illiterate, a man of deep inner culture and an excellent expert in the folk traditions of his people. His father, together with other *sistanis*, migrated from Sistan to southeastern parts of Turkmenia at the beginning of 20th century and Ismail was born in Sarakhs.²

Sistan—or Mulk-i Nimruz ‘The Midday Kingdom’—was most important in the ancient history of the Aryans. Avestan Yima, later Jamshid, was widening the Aryan lands in the southern direction, “on the path of the sun at midday”, as is stated in the second chapter of the *Videvdāt*, and Sistan is considered to be one of the most early abodes of the Iranian tribes, one of the main pretenders to be the homeland of Zarathushtra and the oldest parts of the Avesta. *Zranka* of the Achaemenian inscriptions, *Drangiana* (Δραγγιανή) of the Greek authors (the name survives now in the local small town of *Zaranj* on the Afghan side of the border, as the province is divided between Iran and Afghanistan), it was later named *Saka-stana* (‘The Land of Saka’), due to the advent of the Saka tribes, supposedly on the brink of the Christian era. The place-name *Sistan* originated from *Saka-stana* and *Rustam*, one of the main heroes of Iranian epic, is nicknamed *Sagzi* (‘of Saka origin’); the native home and seat of the dominion of him and his ancestors is *Zabul*—the biggest town on the Iranian side.

Now it is a poor, godforsaken country. Only the ruins of abandoned cities, fortresses and temples recall its former eminence and role in Iranian and Arian history—and, of course, popular folk-tales and legends about *Rustam-i Sagzi*.

According to Ismail, his father was a semi-professional storyteller of high dexterity, keeping in his mind a great number of prose and poetical texts. He was very popular among various audiences of listeners, although earning his bread by cultivating melons and selling them in the bazaar. Ismail, possessing a unique memory, inherited the skill of storytelling

² He died on 24 December 1996.

from his father, and he remembered and performed many narratives from his repertoire.

Among the recorded texts the most interesting and important seems to be the cycle of legends about Rustam and his descendants: Barzu, Azarbarzu, Faramard and Taimur. These legends are partly in rhythmical prose, sometimes even rhymed (resembling traditional *saj'*) with a few passages of purely poetical fragments. The style of this text has some peculiarities that may be due to the fact that it was long current in the oral epic tradition. The text contains many stereotype passages for describing the main heroes, common episodes and the heroes' achievements.

The beginning of every legend is always the same (rendered here in normalized phonetical transcription):

<i>soxan az āsmān forud āmad</i>	The voice came from the heaven,
<i>soxan az gumbaz-e kabud āmad</i>	The voice came from the blue heavenly dome.
<i>soxan-rā bā soxan-varān darvešān</i>	To speeches of eloquent dervishes
<i>sāl-o mäh qarār nadādand</i>	They did not give precise months and years....
<i>farsang be farsang če āšeqān deltang</i>	Parasang after parasang, like sad lovers
<i>mizad-o miāmad be zarb-e xarguš</i>	It struck and it came with the beat of the hare
<i>be širini-ye nabāt</i>	With the sweetness of candy
<i>tamāku kešte-ye šeytān-ast</i>	Tobacco is the sowing of the devil
<i>har ke bekašad yā nakašad megozarad</i>	Whoever smokes it, or does not, will pass
<i>šāh-'Abbās bekašad ke sarvar-e Irān-ast</i>	Let Shah 'Abbas smoke, he is the leader of Iran
<i>soxan bā to pašm-ast—mā namad-māl-am</i>	Words are wool with you—we are felt-makers
<i>soxan bā to kašk-ast—mā qorut-māl-am</i>	Words are dried sour milk with you—we make balls of sour milk
<i>doruy-e bi-hadd-o gorz-e sarafrāz</i>	Endless lies and proud axes
<i>šotor bar keyk sovār-o miravad Širāz</i>	A camel on a flea travels to Shiraz
<i>čand deraxt ast ke namiyāvarad bār</i>	How many trees do not bear fruit
<i>bid-o poda-vo sarv-o safedār-o čenār</i>	Willow and touchwood, cypress, poplar and plane tree
<i>čand deraxt ast ke foru-āvard-ast bār</i>	How many trees bear fruit
<i>norenj-o torenj-o bih-o anār</i>	Orange trees and quince and pomegranate
<i>kuh-e Xāja nān gardad</i>	Let the mountain of Khwaja [the highest in Sistan] become bread,

rud-e Helmand eškana

Let the river Helmand become soup of
minced

meat, vegetables and flour.

*pir-e mard az rāh rasid-o
zahr-e dandān mišekanad*

The old man arrived from a journey
and is having a snack:

*ke pir-am gorde-gir-am
xarj-e man besyār nist
sesad-o-šast kalla xordam*

"I am old [he says], my kidneys ache,

I can not eat much –

I have only eaten three hundred and
sixty boiled

heads [of sheep]

pāčehā-yaš hesāb nist.

and there is no count for their [boiled]
legs!"

(Persian *kalle-pāče* "[boiled sheep's] heads and legs"—is one of the favourite dishes of poor people, on sale in the bazaars everywhere in Persia and Central Asia.)

Many times in these legends the scene of the hero mounting his horse is described identically:

*Rustam Raxš-rā suvār šūd, pā va alya-ye rikāb, bi minnat dar xāna-ye zin
bā ārām yarār gærift, šorū kard ba raftan, bayāt-e āxš mexānd, ba kārzār
mašyūl būd.*

"...Rustam mounted Rakhsh, put his leg in the noose of the stirrup, without any difficulty seated himself comfortably in the home of the saddle, began moving forward, singing the verses of love, performing feats of arms..."

*Suhrāb ... Gulrang-a ba zir-e zin-e murassab darāvurd, pā va alya-ye rikāb,
bi minnat dar xāna-ye zin bā ārām yarār gærift, raft ba meydān-e jāng.*

"...Suhraab ... brought Gulrang under the decorated saddle, put his leg in the noose of the stirrup, without any difficulty seated himself comfortably in the home of saddle, went to the battlefield".

The scenes of hunting and repose of the epic hero are described in the same stereotyped and fixed phrases:

*... Rustam ... Raxš-rā veyl kard ba pā-ye čaridan, čille-ye tir-u kamān-rā
vardāšt. pahn dašt-i biyābān-rā qadam zad tā gur-e-rā va madd-e nazar
darāvurd. čilla-rā va tir-e kamān kard va urā zad ke takān naxurd. va urā
ba gušt ba pust sāxt, ezum-i bisyār jam kard, kabāb kard-u nušid. separ-e
Geršāseb-rā zer-e sar nehād, xurxur-e xāb-rā boland kard...*

"Rustam let Rakhsh go for grazing, took bow-string, bow and arrows. He went along the desert plain till he tracked an onager (wild ass). He put the arrow to the bowstring and hit it so that it didn't stir. He dressed its meat from its skin, gathered a lot of firewood, roasted and partook of it. Then he put the shield of Garshasp under his head and fell asleep, snoring loudly..."

The numerous battle scenes are described also by stereotyped formulas. All such passages, so called *loci communes* (common places), are usual in oral epic tradition. When the name of Rustam is mentioned, it is often accompanied by standard genealogy: *Rustam, Rustam-i Zal, Zal-i Sam, Sam-i Nariman, sahib-i xayma-yi zangali*—Rustam, son of Zal, Zal, son of Sam, Sam, son of Nariman, owner of the tent with small bells. The last definition is constant for Rustam and finds no analogies in Firdausi's *Shahnama*.

Some themes of the stories are also repeated several times in almost the same words, for example the farewell words of the hero to the future mother of his son. Thus Rustam's farewell to the mother of Suhrab is described in the following way:

...*guft: tu agar meri az tu ba šikam-e man nutfa-ye ast-a. či kunam urā? boziband-e xud-rā vā kard, dād Rustam ba dast-e zan-e xud, guft: agar duxtar bāša, xarj-eš kun. agar pesar-e bāša, ba bāzu-yaš basta kun, ba Zabulestān beferest...*

"... she said: you are leaving and I have your seed in my belly. What shall I do with it? Rustam took off an arm-bracelet from his arm and said: if it will be a daughter, spend it for her. If it will be a son, put it on his arm and send him to Zabulistan..."

The situation is repeated also with Suhrab when he says farewell to the mother of his son Barzu, with Barzu when he bids farewell to his wife, and others (Azarbarzu, Faramard...). All these dialogues are repeated literally in the same words.

This episode in Firdausi's *Shahnama* is narrated quite differently:

که آن مهره اندر جهان شهره بود	به بازوی رستم یکی مهره بود
اگر دختر آرد تورار و زرگار	بدو داد و گفتش که این را بدار
به نیک اختر و فال گیتی فروز	بگیر و به گیسوی او بر بدوز

ورایدونک آید ز اختر پسر بیدش به بازو نشان پدر

On the arm of Rustam was a seal, that seal was famous all over the world.
He gave it to her and said: "Take it, and if fortune gives you daughter,
Take it and fasten it to her braid, for luck and worldly happiness
But if a son becomes from the [lucky] star, fasten it to his arm as the sign
of the father."³

In the beautiful complete poetical translation of the *Shahnama* into Russian by Cecilia Banu-Lahuti (1911–98):

Носил богатырь на руке амулет,
О том амулете наслышан был свет.
Его отдавая, Ростем говорит:
«Храни: коль судьба тебе дочь подарит,
К косе прикрепи ей на счастье; всегда
Над нею да светит благая звезда!
А если бы сына послал тебе рок –
Надень ему на руку отчий залог»...⁴

Some geographical and proper names in the Sistani versions also differ from those occurring in the *Shahnama* of Firdausi. Instead of *Alburz* of the *Shahnama*, in Sistani legends we have *kuh-e Alvārd*, *Faramard* for *Faramarz*, *Piran-e Gisa* for *Visa*, *Akman-e Div* for *Akvan-div*. Such phonetical deviations may be to a considerable extent diagnostic and bear witness to an independent development of these legends from some common initial sources—Eastern Iranian folklore oral tradition.⁵ These names can prove that the recorded versions are of oral folklore origin and do not come from written literature.

Rustam in Sistani legends is using weapons that are unknown to Firdausi: he strikes his enemies with *šamšir-i sad-man-i Sam*—the sword of Sam [weighing] hundred mans and sleeps putting the *separ-e Geršāseb*—the shield of Garshasp—under his head.

Some details show later Islamic influence: the Qur'an is mentioned as well as other realities and expressions of Islamic origin. One of the legends describes the victory of 'Ali over Rustam and his conversion to Islam.

The famous combat of Rustam with his son Suhrab does not end with the refusal of Kay Kavus to give the remedy, as in Firdausi's *Shahnama*. Rustam continues his attempts to revive the son killed by mistake. He

³ *Shahnama* (B), II, 176, v. 99–102.

⁴ Firdausi, *Shakhname*, tr. Cecilia Banu Lahuti, II, 14.

⁵ See now also Bas den Uijl, "The trickster "archetype" in the *Shahnama*", 80 [ed.].

carries his corpse in a chest on his back for 38 days till on the 39th he sees an old woman washing a black carpet (*palas*).

He asks her: "Do you think the black carpet can turn white from washing?" — "If the black carpet doesn't turn white, then the dead won't come alive!" , answers the old woman (taught to say so by Kay Kavus).

Rustam's heart trembled, he sat on the ground and put the chest down.

"O my father", said the voice of Suhrab from the chest, "for a second time you drove the poniard into my heart".

So died Suhrab. Rustam put a shroud on him and buried him.

Then follows the episode with the mother of Suhrab, who wants to take revenge for her son. Rustam's sister *Gisyabanu* swears on the Qur'an that her brother has killed his son Suhrab accidentally and Rustam is forgiven by his wife.

Several personalities of the Sistani legends, such as Rustam's sister mentioned above, do not occur in Firdausi's *Shahnama* at all. For example, *Rustam-i yakdast*—'One-handed' Rustam, the scoundrel and imposter of the story about Taimur, son of Barzu. The name of Taimur, being of Turkic origin, may be connected with the conquest of Sistan by Amir Timur (Tamerlane) and is an attempt to legalise his rule over Iranian country.

The differences in the development of subjects between the Sistani legends and the *Shahnama* of Firdausi are quite considerable. Comparisons must be made not only with the standard text of Firdausi but also with the versions of other Iranian epics (*Barzunama*, *Azarbarzinnama* and others). These comparisons will show to what extent these legends are a direct continuation of original Sistani stories about the Sistani hero Rustam, which are one of the folklore sources of the *Shahnama*.

The great poem of Firdausi put an end to the heroic epic as an independent branch of Persian oral literature. Since its composition, the text of Firdausi was recited all over the Persian-speaking countries. But there are signs that in some remote provinces, where Persian written literature came later, popular oral epic tradition continued to be vibrant. Juzjani in his *Tabaqat-i Nasiri* (1260), says he heard a local legend in Sistan about a children's game of "playing kings"—one of the popular motifs of Iranian epic mentioned already by Herodotus (I.114): the boy chosen to play the role of a king becomes a real king and founder of a new dynasty.⁶

⁶ Juzjani, *Tabaqat-i Nasiri*, tr. H.G. Raverty, I, 20-21, cited by V.V. Bartold, "K istorii persidskogo eposa [On the history of Persian epic]", in *Collected Works*, VII, 408, tr. H.H. Schaeder, 157.

The preservation of the Iranian epic tradition in the form of legends about the Sistani hero Rustam and his descendants in Sistan itself testifies to the continuity of this tradition and suggests that it may go back to the primordial Sistani or even Saka epics about Rustam—one of the folklore sources of all versions of the Iranian national epic.

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THE ORAL VARIANT OF THE STORY OF BARZU AMONGST THE TAJIKS OF BOYSUN

Ravshan Rahmoni

INTRODUCTION

In the first half of the 20th century, a number of researchers stated that oral texts are not that far removed from their 'original'. Another group of scholars pointed out that oral texts are subject to many changes. And there were researchers who maintained on the basis of fieldwork and recorded texts that tradition was preserved in texts through the use of specific 'formulas' in storytelling.¹

In order to support and prove their views, folklorists have carried out tests: a certain text was studied by students and afterwards repeated by them and recorded on a tape recorder (1934). The artificial changes that thus appeared in the text were brought forward as proof. Afterwards other researchers criticised these experiments and proposed that a text should be recorded in a natural manner, by a storyteller, and that this process should be repeated and repeated by technical means. On the basis of this, they put forward their scholarly views on this matter.² But before the Second World War, recorded texts were scarce.

Without proof, it was difficult to confirm this or that idea. In order to demonstrate the truth of one or other hypothesis, it was necessary to record texts that were repeatedly performed. Some scholars have expressed their views on the basis of this kind of material and have proposed in their writings to make use of the technical means available at a given time.³

The same issues also present themselves in oral versions of famous written texts; this is especially the case in the national epic of the people of Aryan descent, the *Shahnama*, and in the texts that have been composed as a sequel to the *Shahnama*. In general we may say that the method of using technical means is hardly present in the scholarly works

¹ V.M. Gacak, *Skazochnik i ego tekst. K razvitiyu eksperimental'nogo metoda v fol'klоре*.

² *Ibid.*

³ Gacak, *Skazochnik i ego tekst*, 44-53.

of Tajik folklorists. Therefore the collecting, publishing and researching of oral texts from amongst the people, by making use of tape-recorders and video cameras, may provide the documentation needed to help resolve theoretical issues in folklore and literature. The publication of the oral text of the story of Barzu is one such example.⁴

THE *SHAHNAMA* AND THE PEOPLE

In the past, stories from the *Shahnama* and in particular legends of the family of Rostam have been very famous amongst the Tajiks. From interviews it has become clear that at the beginning and even in the middle of the 20th century oral texts of the *Shahnama* were widespread amongst the Tajiks of Central Asia. However, in those years, the study of folklore had not been firmly established in this region, and therefore not much attention was paid to the collection of oral texts of epic works, specifically the *Shahnama*.

Even in Iran, oral texts of the *Shahnama* were not been collected in the first half of the 20th century. Until recently, almost nothing has been printed about oral texts except for work by Anjavi Shirazi, which has been collected under the title *Firdausinama* in three volumes.⁵

In Afghanistan it has not become clear up till now whether any scholar is seriously working on this subject or not. Only a few scattered examples have been printed in some newspapers and magazines from Afghanistan.⁶ In the years 1981-85 when I was at the University of Kabul, I recorded texts on appropriate occasions, and I often heard that the people recite the *Shahnama* in a beautiful manner and tell its stories in an eloquent way. I was fortunate to be able to record a sample of the story of Luhrasp on tape in 1984.

In Tajikistan also the situation regarding the recording of the *Shahnama* is not good. In 1994 a small book of 64 pages was published on the basis of the material available in the Tajik Folklore Collection of the Rudaki Institute for the study of language and literature of the Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan.⁷ Two years later these texts were reprinted in a bulkier volume, to which the editors also added a few texts from Afgha-

⁴ Rahmoni, ed. *Dostoni Barzu dar guftori Jura Kamol*.

⁵ Anjavi Shirazi, *Firdausinama*.

⁶ 'Rustami doston', ed. A. Kuhzod; 'Rustam va Zol', ed. M. Siston; 'Simurghi saped', ed. A. Kuhzod.

⁷ B. Shermuhammadiyan & D. Obidzoda, ed. *Qissaho az ruzgori Firdavsi*.

nistan. They also included additional material from earlier and contemporary poets, as well as a number of articles by the great scholars on Firdausi and the *Shahnama*.⁸ Two texts I have recorded were also included in this collection.

For more than 30 years, I have been collecting different types of folkloric texts of Tajiks and speakers of Tajik. The texts collected come from Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Iran and Uzbekistan. Whilst collecting the material, I have focused on folk epics and in particular the *Shahnama*. This material could fill a book, but up till now virtually none of it has been published. According to the methodology followed in folklore studies, that is by making precise recordings and collecting background information from the performers, I have recorded some of these texts, for example the story of Siyavush, a couple of times.

In the regions of Central Asia there existed *Shahnama-kh'ani* or the reciting of the *Shahnama*, alongside storytelling on the basis of the *Shahnama* and other epics. I have been informed by old men who could read and write the Persian alphabet and with whom I have conducted interviews over the last 30-35 years, that the recitation of the *Shahnama* as well as the *Shahnama* storytelling tradition, alongside the oral and written stories that have been composed as a supplement to the *Shahnama* (and all other kinds of stories, fairytales, legends and poems), were thriving amongst the Tajiks in the territory of Uzbekistan, in places such as Bukhara, Samarqand and Boysun. A few scholars have referred to this tradition, amongst whom Muhammadjon Shakuri, who made the following remark:

On long winter nights my aunt used to read books and the women of the neighbourhood used to gather and listen. She read about the heroes from the prose *Shahnama*, she read from the *Abu Muslimnama*, from the *Zamchinama*, from the *Hamzanama* and from other epics, and about the generosity of Hatim Tayy, or she exulted in the wonders of the Thousand and One Nights. And there were other things. Sometimes we listened to the *Shahnama* of Firdausi, or the *Divan* of Hafiz, or a selection of the *Divan* of Bidil and the like.⁹

I have not only heard this kind of statement from older people, but I have also been able to make recordings by means of a tape recorder and a video camera. Of course I have done this outside the context of my proper job, which is teaching at the university. In every region I had to visit for

⁸ B. Shermuhammadiyan & D. Obidzoda, ed. *Qissaho peromuni Firdavsi*.

⁹ M. Shakuri, *Sadri Bukhoro*, 158.

whatever reason, I would always take the opportunity to interview people or make recordings. One of the regions that I have been looking at regularly and closely has been the village of Pasurkhi, which is my birthplace. Therefore I would like to present here my findings on the material from this village.

In the village of Pasurkhi in the region of the city of Boysun, it had become a tradition in the 19th and in the early 20th century to tell stories from the *Shahnama*. In the first half of the 20th century there were old men who told stories from the *Shahnama* and who knew large parts from it by heart.

Storytellers such as Mullo Sharif (1888-1972), Mullo Qosim (1882-1966) and Jura Kamol (1921-97) used to tell stories from the *Shahnama* until recently, and because of the interest and the love of the people for these stories they continued to do so. While Mullo Sharif relied more on his gentle and eloquent voice and on the movements of his hands, and on his ability to recite parts of the story in verse, which he sang like a singer, Jura Kamol on the other hand used to rise when he told stories from the *Shahnama*: he spoke in a loud voice and in moments of anguish he used to mimic the war on the battlefields, and in the accounts of Rustam, Suhrab, Isfandiyar, Siyavush, Barzu and others he would cry out loud. Especially during the story of Rustam and Suhrab, he would cry as Rustam, mourning his dear son at the end of the story.

If during the storytelling session a hero would throw his enemy to the ground, Jura Kamol would cry out “Yo Rustam-i doston” (“Oh Rustam-i Dastan!”) and “Yo Ali madad!” (“May Ali help us!”), while he was mimicking how the enemy was lying on the ground, and rising up again. He even neighed like a horse during those sessions. He accompanied his performance by shouts, summons, sermons and yells, by roaring laughter and by bursting into tears: this vivid way of performing was a specialty of Jura Kamol, reminiscent of the storytellers of old. In order to keep the attention of the audience, he sometimes changed his manner of speech, or he would fall silent and look at his audience for several seconds, upon which he suddenly cried out “Ha!” “Yes!”, and would then again continue his story.

I have also recorded this manner of *Shahnama-khʿani* and the telling of stories from the *Shahnama* by the sons of Mullo Sharif: Rahim Sharif (born 1925), Vohid Sharif (born 1941) and from his grandson Qahhor Rahmon (1931-2005), and from the son of Jura Kamol—Ravshan Kamolov (born 1956).

In August 2002, I visited the region of Boysun, Samarqand and Bukhara for a period of ten days together with the American sociologist William Beeman. When he talked to the people of Boysun about their legendary stories, he was very surprised and stressed that all they know had to be recorded and if possible, published. He himself also recorded whatever was told to him.

In this manner the stories 'Rustam-i Dastan', 'Siyavush', 'Rustam and Isfandiyar', 'Rustam and Suhrab', 'Zal the White One', 'Sam', and others have been recorded in the course of time on tape. Each story has its own special features and structure. For example, in one of the stories Rustam is only twelve when he conquers Isfandiyar, and according to the storyteller (Qahhor Rahmon), a herb was growing from the eyes of Isfandiyar which they named *hazorispand* (wild rue) and which could serve as a cure for a thousand ailments.

Today there are still proverbs, expressions and other customs in vogue that are reminiscent of *Shahnama* heroes. For example, in the past in the village of Pasurkhi, when a woman gave birth to a son with a large body, and if the woman survived it, they would name the child Rustam and they would say: "*Rustam-rastam*", meaning that she was saved from death.

In the region of Boysun, they see the story of Barzu as one of the *Shahnama* episodes and they regard Barzu as the one who continued the family line of Rustam.

ABOUT THE *BARZUNAMA*

The *Barzunama* is one of the epics of the Persian-speaking people that has been added to the immortal *Shahnama* of Firdausi. Until the present time, no research in the form of a scholarly treatise has been devoted to the *Barzunama*, although in the writings and articles of scholars such as Anquetil-Duperron, Jules Mohl, E. Blochet, Zabih-Allah Safa and others references can be found to written versions of the *Barzunama*.¹⁰ Moreover, in encyclopaedias from Iran and from other countries articles have appeared under the title "*Barzunama*", which are all very similar. Recently, Akbar Nahvi has published an article entitled "What has not been said about the *Barzunama*", in which he gives as much information as possible

¹⁰ See also Gabrielle van den Berg, "The *Barzunama* in the Berlin *Shahnama* manuscripts", 97-114, and Eleanor Sims, "The earliest recorded *Barzunama* manuscript?", 189-202.

on the written and oral versions of the *Barzunama*. He has tried to summarise and criticise the research of the afore-mentioned authors and of others who have written about the *Barzunama*.¹¹

It is known that in the past the *Barzunama* has become famous amongst the people in two different forms, oral and written; it is natural that in the course of time all epic stories have been transferred from oral to written copies.

According to the information available, the *Barzunama* has been transmitted both in poetry and in prose. It is believed that the poetical text has 65,000 verses.¹² Manuscripts of this book have been preserved in the National Library of Paris, in the Academy Library of Dushanbe, in the Vatican Library, in the Academy Library of Cluj in Romania, and in the Columbia University Library in New York.¹³

Researchers of the *Barzunama* have mentioned the existence of an 'old' and a 'new' *Barzunama*. According to the research of Akbar Nahvi, the author of the 'old *Barzunama*' was Maulana Shamsiddin Kavij (Kavsaj), while the author of the 'new *Barzunama*' was Ata'i, as also other researchers have stated.¹⁴ Much less attention has been paid to the prose version of the *Barzunama*, which can be found mostly as a part of prose *Shahnamas* in both Persian and Turkish. We will limit ourselves here to the orally transmitted story of the *Dastan-i Barzu* or the story of Barzu, as recorded amongst the Tajiks of the village of Pasurkhi in the region of Boysun.

THE ORAL TEXT OF THE *DASTAN-I BARZU* ('THE STORY OF BARZU')

In the 1960s and 1970s, when I was between 12 and 17 years old, I heard the story of my paternal grandfather Mullo Sharif Fayzullaev (1888-1972). In 1989 I recorded a summary of this story from Rahim Sharif, son of Mullo Sharif. This text has been published in 1993 in the journal *Mardumg'iyoh*.¹⁵

Other storytellers, namely Khalil Qosimov (born 1929), Ato Jabborov (born 1930), Homid Sharif (born 1936), Vohid Sharif and Ravshan Kamolov (born 1956) have also summarised and transmitted what they heard and

¹¹ A. Nahvi, "Noguftahoe", 107-30.

¹² Z. Safa, *Hamadasara'i*, 304; Gh.H. Adil, ed. *Danishnama-yi jahan-i islami*, 93.

¹³ William Hanaway, "Borzu-nama", 380-81, and Gabrielle van den Berg, "Borzu-nama".

¹⁴ Nahvi, "Noguftahoe", 116-18.

¹⁵ "Rustam va Barzu", 24-26.

as they remembered it. Khalil Qosimov and Ato Jabborov regarded Barzu as the son of Rustam, while the others considered him to be the son of Suhrab. It is natural that every story in the oral tradition passes from one person to another. When it is told again and again, some points are forgotten by the storyteller and others are added.

In 1995 I recorded another version of the story of Rustam and Barzu, told by Jura Kamol, in which Barzu is considered the son of Suhrab, just as in the written versions of the story. In this version, as in others, the storytellers see Barzu as an inhabitant of the region of Boysun. Many old men think that Barzu once lived as a farmer in Boysun. It is as if he was born here, and was afterwards sent to Afrasiyab to battle Rustam. A short summary of the text is as follows:

Suhrab marries Turkankhatun and gives her a ring; Suhrab is killed in his battle with Rustam

Barzu is born and when grown up works as a farmer together with his mother

Afrasiyab passes Boysun on his way and his soldiers demolish a field of melons. Barzu attacks them with a spade and hits, wounds and kills three hundred of them.

Afrasiyab is worried and sends Piran-i Gesa [Visa] to Barzu

Barzu is brought to the court and tested

Having crossed the Amu Darya, Barzu is sent to war with Rustam

Rustam is wounded by Barzu

Instead of Rustam, the veiled Zavara enters the battlefield.

Barzu hits himself by accident with his mace on the head and is captured and taken to prison

His mother is informed of his situation and crosses the river via Termez; she finds some friends and with their help succeeds in releasing Barzu

Barzu fights Rustam for the second time

On the request of Rustam, the battle between Rustam and Barzu is suspended for 40 days

Zavara poisons the food of Barzu

Turkankhatun informs Rustam that Barzu is his grandchild

Rustam and Barzu, grandfather and grandson, together fight Afrasiyab's army of 10,000 soldiers

Barzu sustains 72 wounds and is brought away on a horse, unconscious.

He is brought to the garden of the king of Farang, whose daughter Farangbanu falls in love with him

A slave girl falls also in love with Barzu. Helped by her cunning mother, she fights to reach her aim

The king of Farang sends Barzu to prison

Rustam is informed of this by the daughter of the king of Farang

Rustam comes to rescue Barzu; the king of Farang is killed, Barzu marries Farangbanu and Rustam returns to Iran.

In past centuries, the story of Barzu and stories from the *Shahnama* were told amongst the people during meetings (*jam'omadho*) and evening parties (*gashtakho*). According to Jura Kamol, a number of people (about 10-15), close friends, came together in the winter season and in spring, and they would have an 'evening party' (*gashtak*). In winter they gathered in a house and in spring they went outside to sit in a field or a meadow. This evening meeting or *gashtak* means to come together in someone's place and to sit around a well-filled table, and to exchange stories, anecdotes, jokes and pleasantries, and to read stories from books. In Boysun it is still a custom to have a *gashtak*, but the telling of epic tales or other stories has become rare.

The oral text of the story has not departed far from the written version. The storyteller has not told this story for more than 25 years. Only on the request of close friends or family, on special occasions, has he sometimes been reminded of his storytelling. Therefore only his children and a few others he used to tell have remembered this story. The son of Jura Kamol, Ravshan Kamol, knows the story of Barzu, and I have twice made a recording (on camera and on tape) of this version during a meeting, but the story has not yet been transcribed.

In the preceding centuries, wrestling ceremonies were not only held during official feasts, but were also organised by rich people on the occasion of a circumcision; wrestling champions from neighbouring countries would also attend these parties. This had become a custom in Boysun and in other parts of Central Asia. In the time of the emirate of Bukhara (until 1920), the wrestling champions of Boysun would go to Bukhara and to Mazar-i Sharif in Afghanistan.

In the time of the Soviet Union, wrestling was also very popular. In those years 60-80 percent of the people who held circumcision ceremonies organised wrestling games at the same time and in some cases wrestling champions from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kirghizstan and Kazakhstan took part in these feasts. This kind of wrestling games is still common in Boysun, although they take place less often every year. I have heard heroic and epic stories numerous times in the context of a discussion of local and regional wrestling games. Perhaps the reason why epic stories are still remembered by the people is the connection with the tradition of wrestling, to which the storytellers also refer.

Jura Kamol says that Barzu comes from Boysun. In his opinion, once upon a time the following happened: The mother of Barzu was said to be of Turkic origin. According to Jura Kamol and his son Ravshan Kamolov,

the area of Boysun has always been essentially Tajik, but on its borders Turkic speaking tribes (Uzbek or Qunghurot) had also come, and in the course of time they mingled with the Tajiks. That is why Suhrab married a girl from an Uzbek family, since this was a good way to promote friendship between Tajik and Uzbek families.

Most storytellers mention that Boysun has been of old a hunting ground for heroes, who like Rustam and Suhrab came from different areas to Boysun in order to hunt or to train. Perhaps in this version some episodes were forgotten by the storyteller and others may have been added—this should become clear from a comparison between the written version and the oral version, but we will not go into this any further here.

In the beginning of the story Barzu is presented as a simple, ignorant, shortsighted countryman, but at the same time he is also said to be sincere, hospitable, full of honour and hardworking, in other words a generous farmer. The storyteller has thus expressed the characteristics of Barzu, and continues:

Barzu means bull! That is the meaning, a fierce and strong bull, working the field and taking what is his share from the field. That is why they have named him Barzu the farmer. For him farming comes first, from his eighth birthday onwards he has been working the fields. With a spade he has ploughed the earth and has harvested from it.

His mother is very devoted to her son, and in times of trouble she hastens to rescue him. Although the old Rustam is weaker than he used to be, he is as the heroes of old sincere and friendly, and when his grandson is in trouble he rushes to save him from death. Other figures in the story of Barzu support the development of the story and the vicissitudes of the real heroes and those who surround them. It should be mentioned that some of the names of the figures in this text are different from those found in the variety of written versions: an example is the name of the mother of Barzu, which is Turkankhatun instead of Shahru. Perhaps the storyteller has forgotten the names in the course of time.

We can state that it is more attractive to listen to a story than to read it. When the story is told, a number of people are present. The audience listens attentively. The storyteller has drawn his audience towards him by the magic of his words in such a way that no one dares to ask a question. By custom, the storyteller starts by raising his hands for prayer.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE TEXT

The story is told in the Tajik dialect of the village of Pasurkhi. What the storyteller has told has been exactly put on paper and published, which may also be useful for dialectological research. We will not speak extensively here about the language of the story, but we will refer to a number of issues.

What strikes one most in the text is the following: the diverse pronunciation of one and the same word, the touched-up expressions, the obscure words, the addressing of the audience, the emphasized way of speaking, the different callings, the repetitions, the use of onomatopoeia and curses, which all make the text more attractive to the listener. For example, the obscure word '*unchi*'; the designation '*chirraz*' (the high voice of a person); the '*shaqar-shaqar*' to express the sound of a horse walking; '*vaghar-vughur*', to make clear the noise of many people; '*hingir-hingir*', the neighing of a horse; the curse '*e kusi yeget-ba*'; the calling '*uuuu*', '*eeee*', '*ore!*' etcetera.

The storyteller uses in some cases the speech of fairytales, in order to connect the different events, such as: '*gapa az inja shunaved*' 'Listen to this'.

In the written version there is a place called Shingon, which is visited by Afrasiyab and where Afrasiyab meets Barzu. In Boysun there is also a place called Ching. It seems that there is a melodious connection here: Shing + on and Ching. I do not know whether there may be a connection from an etymological point of view; proofs are necessary to verify this. In order to solve this kind of problem it would be very useful to collect and research the toponyms of Central Asia. What may be mentioned here is that there is a place in Samarqand that is called the 'Tali Barzu', the 'Hill of Barzu'. Archeologists have found remnants of Sogdian culture there. These findings can be dated back to the 2nd and 3rd century A.D. In its centre there was a palace surrounded by buildings; Soghdian inscriptions have also been found in this place.¹⁶

Because Tajiks and Uzbeks live in the same ecological environment, it is natural that their languages have influenced each other. During the storytelling performance, Uzbek words may be heard such as '*aylanmish*'—to turn, to circle; '*butam*'—a term of endearment; '*yana*'—again; '*kiyim*'—clothes; '*kurishmis*'—meeting; '*qalqon*'—shield; '*qamoq*' 'prison'; '*qanat*'—

¹⁶ *Ensiklopedia Sovetii Tojik VII*, 236.

wing; 'quyma'—fitting; 'pitishli'—similar; 'sayla'—choice; 'tentak'—mad; 'ugh'—arrow; 'ukhsha'—similar; 'ega'—owner and other words.

Some Russian words have entered the language of the people of the former Soviet Union as a result of the media and Soviet communal life. In this text the words 'kapek'—kopek, coin; 'mament'—moment, at this instance and 'rana'—wounded have been used.

In the text of the story a variety of words, morphology and syntax of the dialect, even incomprehensible sentences may be noted, which researchers of spoken language can use.

CONCLUSION

The story of Barzu is only famous amongst the Tajiks in this area. I have tried to find information on Uzbek oral texts and to that end, I have interviewed people from the Uzbek villages of Boysun, and asked whether they knew the Uzbek version of this story. Until the present day, no Uzbek version has been found. However, a prose version in Uzbek is present in the Uzbek version of the *Shahnama*.

In my opinion, the story of Barzu has spread in Boysun via book readers and storytellers. In order to make Barzu more attractive for their audience, the storytellers from Boysun have said that Barzu was born in that area. The people, who are convinced of the truth of fairytales, myths and epics, believed that Barzu is indeed from Boysun. It is a common practice that storytellers sometimes insert the names of local places or persons into their story. This will of course be clarified by further research.

In conclusion, one may say that the stories from the *Shahnama*, in particular those concerning Rustam and his family, have been very popular in the past amongst the people, perhaps due to a connection with wrestling and wrestlers. It is still possible to record the most recent examples of epic stories amongst the people of Iranian origin. Every time I interview people, the storytellers tell a summary of some story, which might be their latest information on a certain text. If they do not tell these stories, they will naturally disappear.

At present, some scholars believe that nothing has been preserved amongst the people, because every year the interest in orally transmitted traditional stories becomes less. But this is not true. For a few more years to come, one may still find traces of earlier oral literature and culture. That is why it is vital to record as much as possible, while one still can.

The last time I went to interview the elderly people from the village of Pasurkhi, in October 2007, I asked them whether they knew something about Barzu. It was very illuminating for me to hear the elderly say the following: "We have heard of Barzu the farmer from our grandfathers. They have told that Barzu had much land in this very place Yakkatut (south of the village of Pasurkhi). He cultivated melons and watermelons."

I hope that in the future more material will be collected, and that the oral variants of *Shahnama*-related texts will be published.

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THE *SHAHNAMA* ORAL TRADITION IN CONTEMPORARY IRAN: THE CASES OF FIRUZKUH AND KHURASAN

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Storytelling in Iran has always been significant for the transmission of collective memory in general.¹ Particularly, the stories about Iranian kings and heroes form the backbone of this collective memory, going back to pre-Islamic times, with the Parthian and Sasanian kings contributing the most to the development of the tradition.² After the emergence of Islam the oral tradition in Iran continued flourishing *vis-à-vis* the initial decline of the literary tradition. The composition of Firdausi's monumental *Shahnama* marked the culmination of the Renaissance of Persian literature and had a considerable impact both on the development of Persian literature and on the storytelling tradition in Iran and the Iranian world, including other stories of the Persian Epic Cycle.³ Although the *Shahnama* has been studied chiefly with regard to its importance in pre-modern literature, it retains considerable influence in the storytelling tradition of Iran up to modern times.⁴

In the last century, due to the modernisation of Iranian society in the Pahlavi and Islamic Republic periods, this tradition suffered a huge setback. In Iran nowadays this decline is an ongoing process, influencing the status of storytelling in general, and the *Shahnama* storytelling particularly. This brief report focuses on various unknown aspects of contemporary *Shahnama* storytelling. In the process of the Leiden Persian Epic Cycle Project, the author was able to visit in Iran during the period November 2006–May 2008. Throughout his stay he travelled extensively within the country and videotaped storytelling performances in various

¹ This fieldwork report is part of an ongoing research for the Persian Epic Cycle Project, which is conducted at School of Middle Eastern Studies, the University of Leiden. Many thanks are due to my colleague Dr Gabrielle van den Berg for the constructive discussions I have had with her.

² M. Boyce, "The Persian Gosan and Iranian minstrel tradition", 10-45.

³ For example see the case of the *Barzunama*, G. van den Berg, "The *Barzunama* in the Berlin *Shahnama* manuscripts", 97-114.

⁴ O. Davidson, *Poet and hero in the Persian Book of Kings*; M. Omidstalar, "Could al-Tha'libi have used the *Shahnama* as a source?", 338-46.

regions, among them Firuzkuh and Khurasan, chosen for discussion here due to their significance for the contemporary oral tradition of the *Shahnama*—and their special historical and geographical role in the development of the Iranian cycle of kings in oral tradition.

KHURASAN

Given that Khurasan is the cradle of the *Shahnama* literary and oral tradition, it is interesting to examine the current situation of storytelling there. With this in mind, the author set out for Khurasan from Tehran on 15 May 2007. Throughout his stay in Khurasan, valuable help was provided by Houshang Javid from Turghaba of Mashhad, an expert in the storytelling tradition of modern Iran. Considering the general image of declining storytelling in Iran, it was a great pleasure to see that in Khurasan it is very much alive. In spite of the modernisation of life in urban areas, the oral tradition remains strong in various forms: storytelling (*naqqali*) and *Shahnama* recitation (*Shahnama-kh'vani*).

In Khurasan, particularly Mashhad, there was an opportunity to come across a rare type of storytelling, that of the storyteller-musician who narrates by playing the *tar* (lute). This is the case of Muhammad Yeganeh, who performed with his *tar* at his house on 16 May 2007. Yeganeh, who is about sixty years old, is a professional storyteller who learned his profession from his father and has been really active in preserving this tradition in Mashhad. Yeganeh holds regular classes of storytelling at his house and he counts at least ten students. Three of them were present during his performance, which lasted twenty minutes.

The theme of the storytelling was Siyavash's birth and exploits. During his performance, Muhammad Yeganeh used a personal paper notebook. It is an intriguing spectacle to see a *tar* musician sing the story of Siyavash's birth. The time for music and singing was divided, with music covering most of the performance. When he wanted to sing, he altered the rhythm of the *tar* music by introducing a musical motto in order to create the appropriate background for singing. Once the singing part was over, he changed the rhythm of his *tar*. This change of the rhythm and singing-narration of the story makes the *tar* storytelling performance a fascinating process. The combination of traditional music, singing and the content of the story has an immediate impact on the audience, helping to transmit the story and the message, creating a special atmosphere and

enabling the audience to transfer themselves to the imaginary setting where the story takes place.

The so-called musical storytelling is a special genre of storytelling, entirely in cities, which could catch the attention of the Iranian state and academics. Indeed Yeganeh seems to be the only professional storyteller in Khurasan nowadays. Although there are some other individuals who tend to recite some verses from the *Shahnama*, they cannot be viewed as storytellers because of the lack of storytelling repertoire and skills. Instead they could be viewed as imitators of storytellers.

FIRUZKUH

This region has been largely associated in the western mind with the Isma'ilis during the Saljuq and Mongol periods. Firuzkuh is a mountainous region with a number of villages located a few kilometres northeast of Tehran. It is not far from the capital but due to its mountainous landscape, it remains isolated and at the same time has preserved many features of storytelling too. One of the few active storytellers in Firuzkuh is Mir Hussein Nouri.

After receiving the necessary information from Muhammad Kamalian (Iranology Foundation, Tehran), the author travelled to Iftar village in the Firuzkuh region to meet Nouri at his house (11 May 2007). The author enjoyed Iranian hospitality and interviewed Nouri about the status of storytelling in Iftar and afterwards the storyteller read some passages from the *Shahnama*.

Given that almost nothing is known about storytelling in the Firuzkuh region, Nouri was interviewed on this issue and provided revealing information. According to this interview, storytelling in the region is gradually declining. Iftar remains the only village in the area that preserves aspects of storytelling. Nouri is the senior figure of *Shahnama* reader and storyteller in Iftar. His performances are rare and they take place only at religious commemorations of the community and family gatherings. On these occasions he leads the *Shahnama-kh'ani* (*Shahnama* reciting), not *naqqali* (storytelling), performances. Sometimes he is accompanied by younger figures. These performances have a local range and as a result there is no sign of storytelling activity in the rest of the Firuzkuh villages. The storyteller is not a professional one. He narrates stories only in his free time during various parts of the day. The narration does not take

place every day and depends on the circumstances and the mood of Nouri and his environs.

Nouri's repertoire includes both the *Haidari* cycle (stories about 'Ali b. Abi Talib) as well as the *Shahnama* stories. He is capable of reciting the *Shahnama* in his own local accent. When the author asked him to recite a portion of the *Shahnama*, Nouri asked, "What portion do you prefer?" and the answer was "A story related to Alexander!" Then Nouri opened immediately the printed book and started reciting the story of Darab and Alexander in Darab's reign. It did not last more than fifteen minutes. He remained seated all the time looking at his book and sometimes glancing at his audience. He stopped only for a few seconds to take a breath and restart. The rhythm was monotonous without any special breaks or disruptions.

During Nouri's performance he read with particular devotion and concentration, giving the impression that the *Shahnama* had a metaphysical significance for him. He later explained that the *Shahnama* is an embodiment of the heroic past of Iran, the stories about the character and lifetime of Iranian kings and the model of life they represented to common Iranians; a treasury of cultural proportions for him. Narrating these stories has a didactic meaning and informs the new generations of Iranians about the code of behaviour (chivalry), philosophical principles (dualism, agnosticism) and mentality of Iranians in the remote past of their civilisation. These principles have an impact on the lives of the people, who view the *Shahnama* as a device for sharing common culture and memory.

What is worth mentioning in Nouri's work is that he does not have any *tumars* or personal notes but he relies entirely on a printed anonymous text of the *Shahnama* that was published in the 1950s-70s (undated). This along with the fact that Nouri is probably the most active storyteller, suggests that the *tumar* tradition is most probably no longer alive in the Firuzkuh region. The use of the printed *Shahnama* text reflects the developments that the *Shahnama* reading and storytelling tradition underwent in the Pahlavi period.

Another note concerning Nouri is that he is able not only to recite and repeat Firdausi's account but also to use the *mutaqarib* metre in order to improvise and write his own poetry, imitating Firdausi's style. He writes poetry in a normal school notebook using blue ink and uses these notes as an auxiliary tool when he recites the *Shahnama*. The content of his poetry is about various *Shahnama* verses and stories combined with developments of modern Iranian history. For example during the narra-

tion of Firdausi's verses the poet interpolates his own verses referring to events, such as the return of Imam Khomeini to Iran in 1979. Thus he compares Khomeini's strength and vigour with the strength of the *Shahnama* heroes.⁵ This type of interpolation seems to occur in many stories of the *Shahnama* as narrated by Nouri; his improvisation is an innovation for *Shahnama-kh'ani* in Iran.

Nouri's involvement in the *Shahnama* recitation is important because he represents a type of a *Shahnama-kh'an* that is tending to vanish in modern Iran. He dwells in the countryside, lives a traditional life and, given the modernisation of storytelling in terms of language, repertoire of stories and theatrical techniques in major urban centres, his role is of vital importance for the preservation of the pre-modern tradition of the *Shahnama* storytelling and reading.

The preceding account mentions some aspects of the *Shahnama* oral tradition in the region of Firuzkuh and Khurasan in modern Iran. What is striking in these two regions is that oral tradition remains an important means of collective memory. The received opinion that storytelling is declining, especially in Tehran, is true but it must be noted that it is still strong in rural areas and some urban centres.⁶ Moreover, oral tradition in areas such as Khurasan retains a pre-modern style, resulting from the nation building and modernising process during the Pahlavi period, which was almost entirely focused on the urban environment, whereas storytelling retained its traditional image and value in villages and tribal areas. The nationalisation of education and the public mind did not reach rural areas, where the storytellers continued performing in their traditional fashion.

Contrary to Tehran and other major cities, rural storytelling remains less influenced by modern concepts, such as nationalism as well as various clichés concerning methodology and repertoire.

It is noteworthy that storytellers in Khurasan and other areas have a larger repertoire than their colleagues in Tehran and they do not restrict themselves to some standard stories, such as Suhrab and Rustam and so on. This results from the fact that local societies in Iran have not undergone the same degree of modernisation in terms of economy and lifestyle as

⁵ More material on this issue is to be published in a forthcoming book by the author.

⁶ For the case of the *Shahnama* and the Bakhtiari tribe, see P. Khosronejad, "The Shahnameh in Bakhtiari nomadic society: anthropological aspects of hero and heroism", 321-26.

Tehran, Isfahan and other cities. Hence, comparatively speaking, the inhabitants of these areas devote more time on storytelling as a means of entertainment than the dwellers of Tehran. Thus the demand for a larger repertoire on behalf of storytellers is greater, in order to avoid repetition of a small number of stories.

The current status of oral tradition in Firuzkuh and Khurasan is gradually, not rapidly, declining. Storytelling is important for the cultural identity of Iranians. Hence it is a demanding task for the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Iranian academics to step in, finance and support the preservation of such a valuable profession, habit and cultural monument for all Iranians.

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